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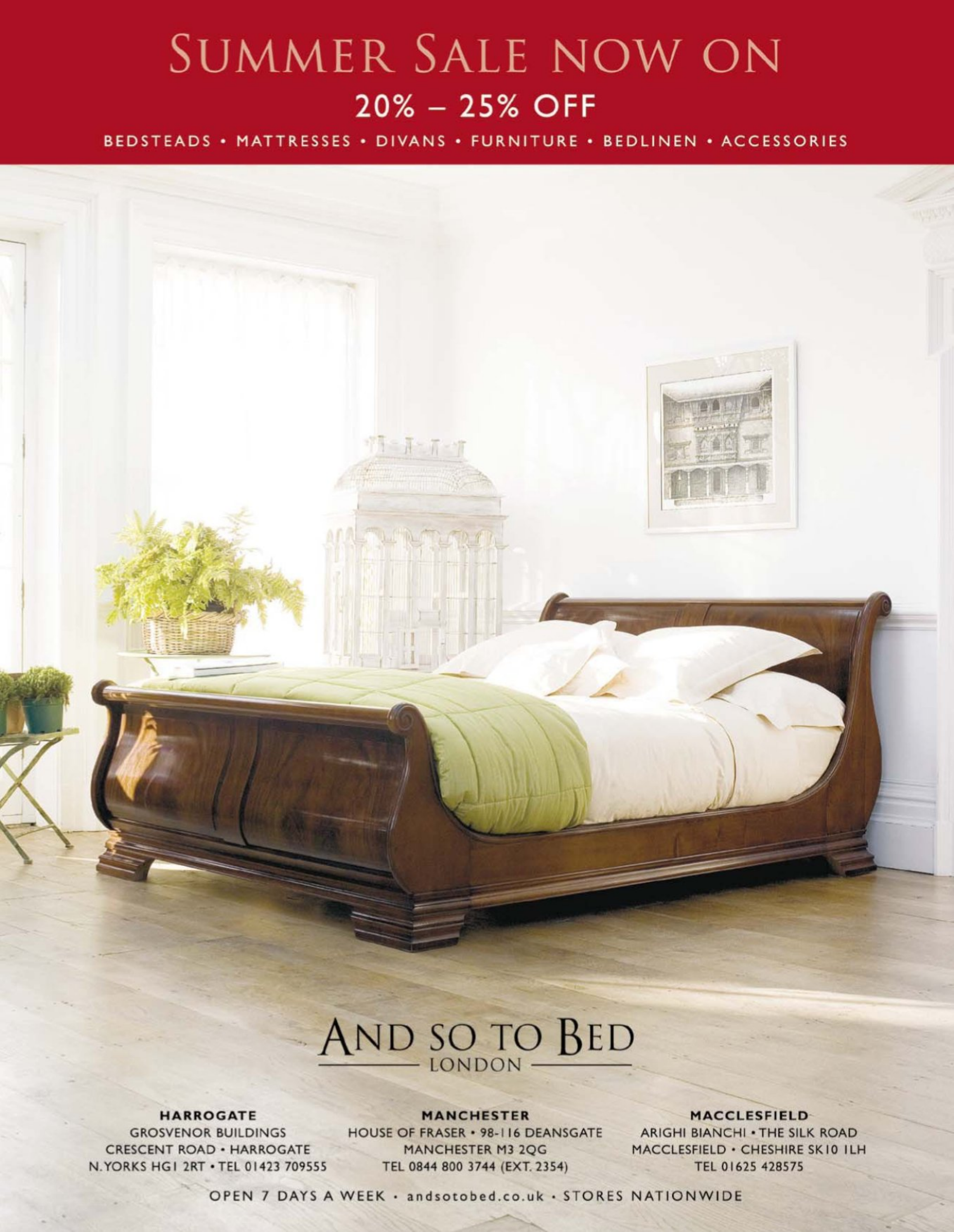
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Everything You Need in a Kitchen

Howard & Tanya Rishton's kitchen, Rawtenstall
Designed by Natalie Braddock

"Everything we need is there, in the right place - Natalie designed it brilliantly"

When Howard and Tanya Rishton took on the adventurous task of self-building their home in Rawtenstall, they wanted a kitchen that would not only complement the property but also suit their needs. After seeing an advert for Diane Berry Kitchens, they decided to visit the Manchester showroom and were instantly impressed and knew they had found their dream kitchen designers.

"The house is quite modern, with a huge open-plan kitchen/diner/snug space," said Tanya. "I had an idea to go for a minimalist, trendy kitchen but I also wanted a good cooking range." Designer Natalie Braddock came up with a stunning contemporary design featuring walnut-effect units and high-gloss cream surfaces. A comprehensive assortment of integrated appliances from Miele complete the kitchen, which Tanya says is perfect for her and Howard's needs. "Everything we need is there, in the right place – Natalie designed it brilliantly, she thought of things I would never have thought of. We live in our kitchen!"

Despite the build taking two years rather than the six months the Rishtons were expecting, Tanya praised Diane Berry Kitchens. "Diane's team was fantastic," she said. "I changed my mind about a few things during the build but they were very accommodating. We're really happy with the end result"

Diane Berry has 29 years of experience in the kitchen business and along with her like-minded team has earned a reputation for attention to detail and flawless planning. Visit her Manchester showroom for advice on creating the kitchen of your dreams.

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WELCOME TO OUR JULY ISSUE

Concept's Katie (left) and Jennie (right) with Sophie Conran

This edition turned out to be a fairly patriotic issue of *Concept For Living*.

I'm Welsh, and fiercely proud of it – a fact that crept up on me while living away from home in France and Spain among other places. But I also consider myself to be British. And when asked recently by a German radio station (long story...) whether I thought of myself as European, the answer to that was also yes. Pride is said to be the original and most serious of the seven deadly sins, but surely pride can be a positive thing too? A celebration? It's not what you are proud to be that's important: Welsh, British, European, it's that you care enough about something to shout about it. When we started talking about this in the office, it didn't take long for us to realise we needed to do a whole trend page on some of the cool new patriotic British flag-inspired products that are around (check them out on page 130 – you'll love what you see). And who better to meet and interview for an issue about being proud to be British than the woman who kick-started the whole Union Jack trend, Jan Constantine (*England's Dreaming* page 28)? Jan kindly showed us around her fantastic Cheshire home, which is just as bold and inspirational as her hand embroidered textile designs – I left happily clutching a Jan Constantine Welsh flag red dragon cushion.

Also in this issue we chatted to daughter of British design icon Terence Conran, Sophie Conran about her new range for Portmeirion (page 111) and we headed to Norfolk to visit one of our three July issue reader homes (page 48). Holly Barn has won several design and architecture awards including the RIBA Mansel Medal 2006 for the best one-off house designed by an architect in the UK, the *Grand Designs* Best New-build House 2007 and a RIBA National Award and proved well worth the 12-hour round trip from *Concept* HQ. As always, we've also featured plenty of new furniture and design buys plus brilliant home and garden-related places and events in the North to discover. Which is what *Concept For Living* is all about.

Enjoy the issue. See you next month...

Caroline Jones, Acting Editor

THIS ISSUE IN NUMBERS... 805 MILES TRAVELLED VISITING READER HOMES **197 SUMMER BUYS WE LOVED THAT HAD TO BE WHITTLED DOWN TO 62** 7 SUNNY DAY PLAYLISTS MADE **3 EMERGENCY TWISTER ICE LOLLY RUNS**

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RETAIL THERAPY

From classic floral print designs to vibrant kitchen and bathroom trends this month we bring you the latest products sure to brighten up your home this summer.

MAIN IMAGE
Nature continues to inspire Wilman Interiors with the launch of the new 'Verona' **flock wall coverings** collection. 'Carla' features meandering orchids combined with luxury flock and sharp colour contrasts to create a dramatic impact. Luxury flocks cost £90 per roll and semi-plains cost £40 per roll. **Tel. 0845 271 7333 or visit: www.wilmaninteriors.com**

INSET

Abode Interiors offer a selection of on-trend **tables**, suitable for all price ranges and perfect for adding a stylish tone to the home. As pictured the contemporary glass table is priced at £484.99.
Tel. 0116 2600 252
Visit: www.abode-interiors.co.uk

LEFT

'Iris' **freestanding fire** is one of the latest designer fires introduced at Mark Elliot Furniture. Fuelled by bioethanol and freestanding with no connection, cables, chimney or flue needed 'Iris' can be used as a stunning centre piece in any room. Priced at £2799.
Tel. 0161 929 1870 or visit: www.bioethanolfires.co.uk

LEFT BELOW

'Identity' is the new stunning collection of eight signature **wallpapers** from Harlequin ranging over a variety of mouth-watering colour ways. From 'Acacia', a shadowy motif, depicting the silhouettes of trees to 'Brighton', a simplistic interpretation of Brighton's regency townhouses, there is a large selection of prints to choose from. As pictured 'Perception' is a 3-D cube design stretching away into infinity. Prices start from £42 per roll.
Tel. 0844 5430 299
Visit: www.harlequin.uk.com

ABOVE

This summer Guzzini have launched a range in the fashion forward colour: yellow. There is no better way to dine in style than with their latest al fresco **tableware** collection. Prices start from £20.80 for a two-tone salad bowl!
Visit: www.formahouse.co.uk

The new 'Corbiere' **bed**, priced at £3,575, from And So To Bed is inspired by the classic Louis XV design. The hand caned mahogany frame has been crafted with floral carving, standing a tall 1.54 metres high and is available with a wide selection of luxurious bed linens and accessories. **Tel. 0808 144 4343 or visit: www.andsotobed.co.uk**

ABOVE

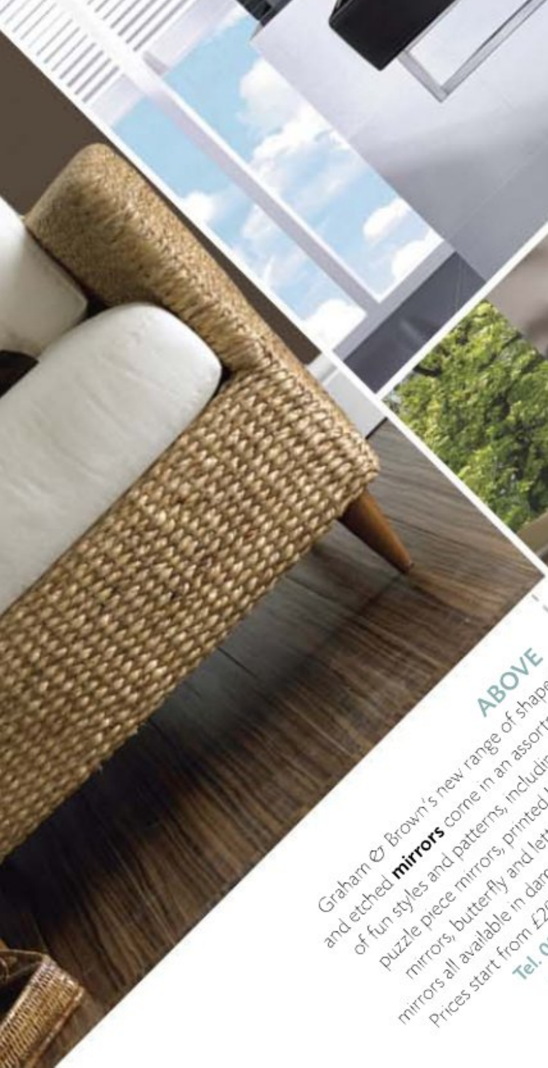
The 'Notting Hill' **slipper chair** as featured is priced at £2,000, it brings a classic design right up to date with a striking multi-coloured striped fabric with a solid oak frame. Black Orchid Interiors' luxurious armchairs are glamorous designs that reflect the baroque and ornate with traditional French carving, button detailing and sumptuous fabrics. **Visit: www.blackorchidinteriors.co.uk**

LEFT
New to Dunelm Mill are the 'Kimino' **bud vases** priced at £6.99 for a set of three. Taken from the summer collection the vases are a great way to add a simple hint of colour and statement into a neutral room. **Tel. 08451 656 565 or visit: www.dunelm-mill.com**

'Memento' from Villeroy & Boch has been updated with new ceramic pieces, the collection includes shower tray options and furniture elements. Included is a dramatic black WC, bidet and flush fitting shower tray available in contemporary colour choices. The range is based upon versatility and its designs are adaptable to complement any setting. As pictured the 'Memento' basin in black is priced from £664.70. **Tel. 020 8871 4028 or visit: www.villeroy-boch.co.uk**

BELOW LEFT
Adding to SieMatic's extensive portfolio of **kitchen furniture**, the company has extended its range to incorporate all 1,950 colours of the Natural Colour System. Now available in bright colours such as saffron yellow, truffle grey and tranquil shades such as pastel green. All made from high-density furniture and offered with either a matt and high gloss finish. Prices start from £20,000. **Tel. 020 7739 4644 or visit: www.urbaninterior.co.uk**

BOTTOM
Twentytwo Interiors showcases the latest **outdoor furniture** collection from Lloyd Loom, including contemporary conservatory and garden furniture that is suitable for outdoor use all year round in a choice of colours. **Tel. 01904 620 090 or visit: www.22interiors.co.uk**



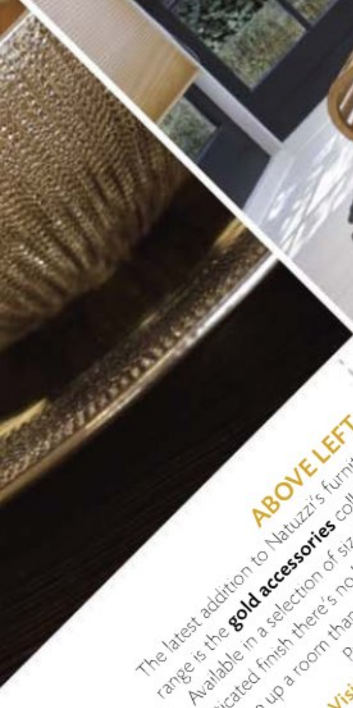
ABOVE
Graham & Brown's new range of shaped and etched **mirrors** come in an assortment of fun styles and patterns, including jigsaw puzzle piece mirrors, printed lace etched mirrors, butterfly and letter-shaped wall mirrors all available in damask detail finishes. Prices start from £20 for a shaped mirror. **Tel. 0800 328 8452 or visit: www.grahambrown.com**

'Contempo' **wallpaper** from Nono Interiors starts from £45 per roll and is available in natural colours punctuated by flashes of mineral colours, such as indigo and olive green. The statement lace design as featured is available on wide-width paper. **Tel. 01282 471 622 or visit: www.nono.co.uk**

'Charleston' **wallpaper** from Blendworth, is inspired by the sub-tropical climate and quaint coastal gardens of the historic colonial town in America. Offering an eclectic mix of prints and weaves 'Charleston' is designed to bring a sense of romance and grandeur into the home. As pictured 'Linden' highlights the leaves on this printed vine design. Fabrics range from £24.50 to £39.50 per metre. **Tel. 023 9259 4911 or visit: www.blendworth.co.uk**

INSET

Vivid colour is on-trend this season, update your home in an instant with a variety of colour ways from ICTC. Their new exciting **tableware** collection from Missoni features 'Tropical' a juicy selection of pinks, greens, turquoises, oranges and reds. The range also includes dinner, tea and coffee sets. **Tel. 01603 488 019 or visit: www.ictc.co.uk**



ABOVE
'Chic Retreat' is the latest **emulsion** from The Little Greene Company, developed to cope with the most used areas in the home and available in all Little Greene shades, including 'English heritage', 'catwalk' and 'original' colours. Prices start from £29 for 2.5 litres.
Tel. 0845 880 5855 or visit: www.thelittlegreene.com

INSET ABOVE
Hand-carved from mahogany the latest sophisticated **dressing table** from Christopher Guy has been designed to accentuate its elegant curves, also available with a stylish oval mirror. A selection of finishes include Java Cafe, White Lacquer, Black Lacquer, Old Forest and Autumn Leaf. Prices start from £3,052.10.
Tel. 020 7348 7366 or visit: www.christopherguy.com

The 'Classix II' collection from Cole & Son is an eclectic selection of hand-printed, digitally printed and **hand-flocked wallpapers**. Also included are the large-scale designs from Italian designer Fornasetti.
Tel. 01244 312 822 or visit: www.cole-and-son.com

ABOVE LEFT
The latest addition to Natuzzi's furniture range is the **gold accessories** collection. Available in a selection of sizes and in a sophisticated finish there's no better way to brighten up a room than with a chic vase. Prices start from £90.
Visit: www.natuzzi.co.uk

ABOVE CENTRE
This summer Luxaflex introduce heat-reflecting **conservatory blinds** 'Duette' and 'Plissé' to control the temperature in your conservatory all year round. Both blinds offer exclusive designs with new protective coatings. Available in a host of colours, styles and textures, prices start from for £45.
Tel. 0800 652 7799 or visit: www.luxaflex.co.uk

DESIGN NEWS

Blue crush

Prepare for the summer and deck your home out in the azure shades of the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas with **fabrics** from the new John Stefanidis range. The brand new 'Udaiphur' in Aegean Blue is priced at £86.25 per metre. **Visit: www.johnstefanidis.com to see the full fabric collection.**

GINGHAM GLORY

The latest Peacock Blue brochure is full of fresh and fabulous new additions. As well as featuring their usual high-quality **bed linen**, the new range of products includes **blankets** and **throws**, a **towelling** range and **laundry accessories**. Their fresh and understated new 'Gingham' bed linen and accessories range is our favourite new find though. Available in a choice of red, navy, natural, yellow, lilac, green, pink and Venice blue, the bed covers, pillowcases, curtains and lampshades are soft and pretty and will bring a feeling of peace to your rest space. **Prices start from £10 for a pillowcase, £39 for a duvet cover. Visit: www.peacockbluehome.co.uk or call 08450 175 566 to find out more.**

Danish delight

You'll love new website www.danishceramics.com which boasts over 400 products and **ceramics** from a host of Nordic designers including Anne Black, formfatale and Karin Eriksson. Bring a Danish touch to your home this summer with one of their products like these Karin Eriksson tealight holders, €29 or formfatale porcelain gadgets from €34 go on, treat yourself! **Visit the new website at: www.danishceramics.com**

LUXE FOR LIFE

Best known for its luxurious scented candles Jo Malone has launched a limited edition Dark Amber & Ginger Lily **Bathing Soak**. The new bath-time treat, designed to gently cleanse and scent the skin, fuses a combination of black cardamom, orchid and kyara wood and most importantly comes in a classic black and gold tub – the perfect plush accessory to your bathroom. The Dark Amber & Ginger Lily Bathing Soak (pictured) is priced at £44 and also available in the collection is the Home Candle, £37.50 (200g). **To shop online visit: www.jomalone.co.uk or tel. 0870 034 2411.**

In need of a new favourite website to visit on your lunch break? Visit: **www.cadeaux-leeds.com**, the brand new site for Leeds' popular contemporary gift boutique, Cadeaux. **Add it to your bookmark bar now.**

First **Cath Kidston** store in North West open

If you're as obsessed with Cath Kidston as we are, pop along to the newly opened Cath Kidston store in Liverpool. The store is the first in the North West and is part of a recently refurbished Victorian warehouse building in the Peter's Lane district, which is now part of the Liverpool One development.

"We're thrilled to open our first stand-alone shop in the North West of England," said Cath. "Liverpool is going through a real renaissance and we're looking forward to being part of that buzz. We can't wait to bring our full range of homeware, fashion and kids to the city."

The store stocks all your favourite Cath Kidston trademark prints and products as well as her new Summer 2009 range. If you're heading to a festival this summer make sure you can spot your tent from a mile off with the Cath Kidston **floral tepee**, £100 (pictured), or give your outdoor summer evening meals a quirky vintage mood with this cute **tablecloth**, £28, and bright **glassware** from £2.50, in pink, green and blue.

Tel. 08450 262 440 for more information or visit: www.cathkidston.com to see the full range of products or visit: www.liverpool-one.com for more about the store.

Brigitte Kitchens open new showroom

The new Brigitte Kütchen showroom has opened in Goole, East Riding of Yorkshire. Brigitte is one of the main UK trading arms of the German kitchen manufacturer H.Frickemeier and the new showroom boasts 3,250sq ft showcasing the high **quality kitchens** for which the brand is known. We love their 'Signo' and 'Sinus' (pictured) ranges, starting prices £7,000 and £9,000 respectively, which can both be found along with their many other ranges in the latest Brigitte Kütchen catalogue.

Visit: www.brigitteuk.co.uk for more information.

WHITE HOT NEW NATUZZI SOFAS

Brand new from top Italian furniture brand Natuzzi are three new **sofa** models that tick all the 'luxurious look' boxes for summer 2009. Pictured is the minimalistic 'Sigma' sofa, composition shown from £3,530, which is available in all Natuzzi leathers as well as a leather/fabric mix.

Log onto: www.natuzzi.co.uk to view the new products.

GLAMOUR JUST GOT EASY

If you're in the market for a dining room overhaul or you want to create a striking entrance hall Leeds-based EASipanel have produced a new unique range of **Raised & Fielded panels**. The wood-grain texture can be enhanced with paint, wax or varnish. In a nod to the monochrome trend we love them painted with black, oil-based gloss. Available in two height options, from £8.99 (3ft), £10.99 (5ft). Pictured painted with 'Jack Black' Oil Gloss paint £14.68 (1ltr) and Liberon St Germaine gilt cream £8.61 (30ml) from The Little Greene Paint Company (www.thelittlegreene.com). For your local EASipanel retailer visit: www.easipanel.co.uk or tel. 0115 911 3500.

DESIGN NEWS

If you're in need of a new **jewellery box** or stand we love Umbra's latest range of over ten to choose from, available at www.umbra.com. Pictured is the Partridge jewellery stand, priced at £21, and the Raindrop jewellery dish, priced at £22.

LOVE AT FIRST **LIGHT**

West Yorkshire-based Hannah Nunn has designed a new range of **lamps** and **illuminated wall panels**. Inspired by the botanical world, Hannah fuses elegance with a contemporary twist to create soft glowing lights that add a cosy feel to your home. Her new pieces feature Paperwhites, Ferns, Snowdrops and Daisies, and don't miss the indoor fairy lights, pictured, £110 for a 10m string with 20 mini shades.
Go to: www.hannahnunn.co.uk to find out more.

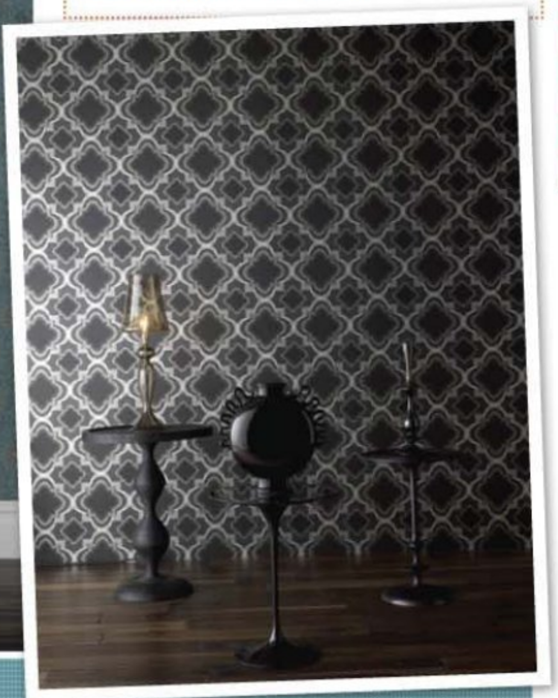
In the loop

One of the North's top international centres for contemporary art, The Yorkshire Sculpture Park is showcasing a special **ring** show in its contemporary design shop this summer until 30 August. As well as stylish jewellery the rings make perfect display pieces for your dressing table, or ideal gems to place in on a chic glass jewellery stand for all to admire. Pictured are Stephanie Johnson's 18ct yellow, red and green curl rings.
Visit: www.ysp.co.uk or call 01924 832 631 for further information.

Photo: Stephanie Johnson

CHECKMATE

With this adorable red and ivory **check fabric chair** Lavender & Sage are definitely onto a winner. Their brand new range of home accessories and furniture takes its inspiration from French country living and offers everything for the home from soft furnishings to country-style dinnerware and traditional furniture. Bring a seasonal update to your living room or brighten your bedroom with the 'Eveline' chair, £475.
Visit: www.lavenderandsage.co.uk to place your order or tel. 0845 601 0522 for more information.



PAPER **ART**

Not content with being a cookery writer as well as designer of the 'Sophie Conran for Portmeirion' range of kitchen and tableware, Sophie Conran has now turned her hand to **wallpaper** design. In collaboration with Arthouse, Sophie has put together a pattern book showcasing the ten just-launched wall coverings. The eclectic collection features feminine, romantic and opulent patterns and a range of shades from the vibrant to the luxurious.
To find your nearest stockist visit: www.arthouse.com or tel. 01706 239 600.

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Image courtesy of Schiatti. Visit: www.schiatti.co.uk or tel: 0039 362 328 162

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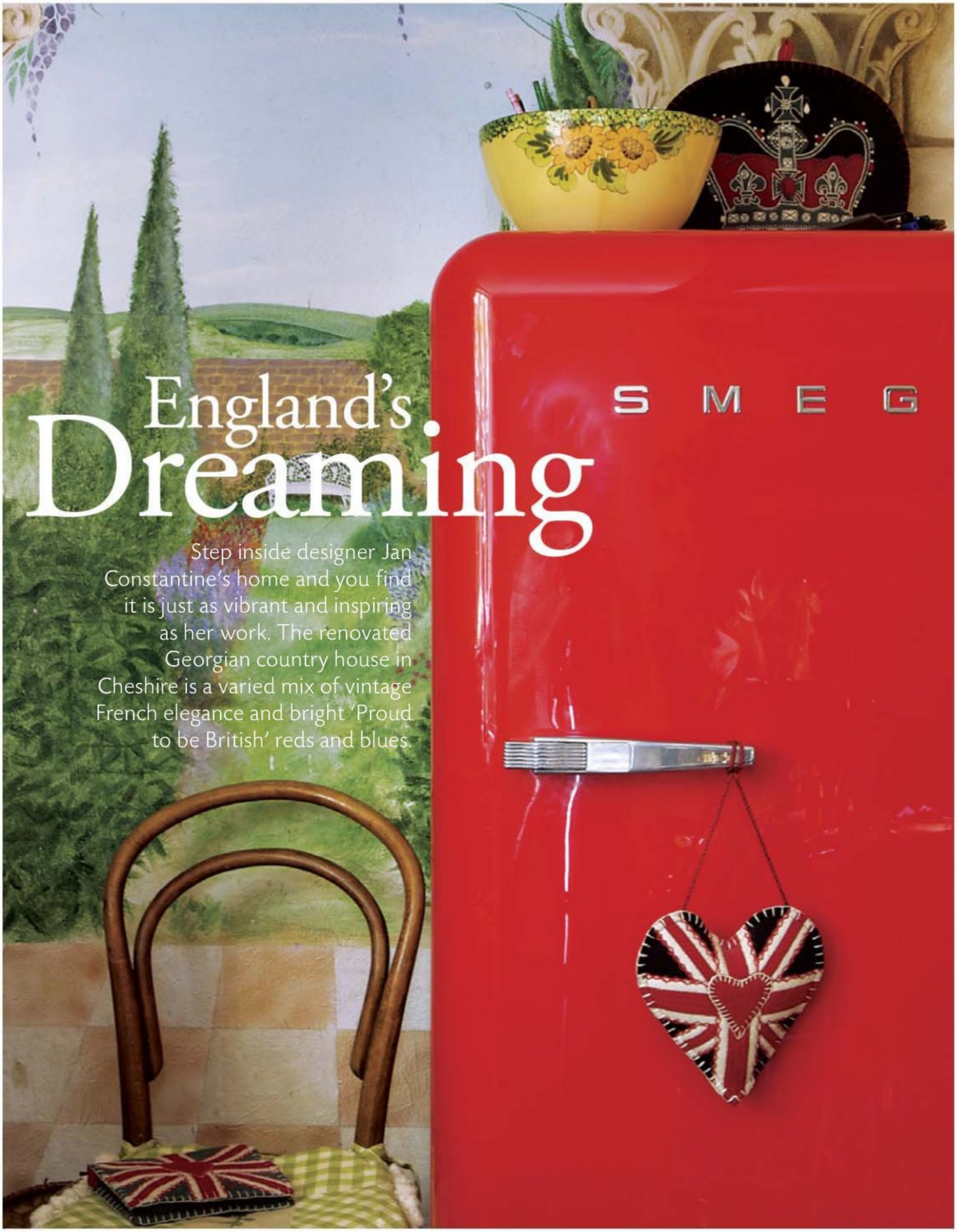
THIS PAGE Jan keeps the bedroom space feeling fresh by constantly updating and changing her accessories. **OPPOSITE** The kitchen features a striking red SMEG fridge and a mural painted by Jan

England's Dreaming

Step inside designer Jan Constantine's home and you find it is just as vibrant and inspiring as her work. The renovated Georgian country house in Cheshire is a varied mix of vintage French elegance and bright 'Proud to be British' reds and blues.



"We liked the character of the property so we kept all of its original features and added more"

Jan Constantine, who describes her home as an "eclectic" project that she "changes all the time", is currently on a high. She's just got back from a business trip to London. The upshot of the trip was a successful shoot for her latest catalogue and three top buyers – including Harrods – clamouring to stock her hand embroidered collection of cushions, throws, lavender bags and more. And it's no surprise, Jan's home is packed full of her work and serves as a constant sounding board and inspiration palette, which like her work makes an instant impression. "I'd love a shop really," says Jan. "Because I enjoy setting up the armoire shots on brochure shoots so much: reds, blues, creams, and I'm the same at home. I constantly move things about, I'll bring out the cream one day, red the next…"

The Lancashire-born designer moved into the home with her husband, David, a painter decorator, 16 years ago. At the time the couple were living in London where Jan had a successful career in the fashion industry. "I loved it. I lived in London for ten years and it was great," says Jan. "I got to go around the world and it was a great job, but when you've done it for ten years… I just reached a point where I wanted to be self-employed. Travelling a lot and doing all the shows, you feel like you're on a treadmill. I wanted a change."

That change came in the shape of their 1820s Georgian house in Cheshire, which they discovered one weekend when they were up north visiting family. "The house was up for auction so David and I went to see it straight away," says Jan. "It all happened so quickly. We loved the property, went to the auction and bought it. But meanwhile we hadn't sold our house in London and it all got a bit hectic."

The four-bedroom home on the Cheshire/Staffordshire boarder came complete with stables, in which Jan knew it would be perfect to set up her business. "We had a business plan in which we laid out the buildings the property had and exactly what we planned to do with them," she says. "It's been a long haul; moving away from London was a huge lifestyle change, especially because I had to become self-employed. But sometimes that's what you need to do – take a chance and see what happens."

After moving into the early 19th-century property the Constantines undertook several restoration and repair projects such as opening up the kitchen fireplace to put in an Aga, but they were keen to stay true to the home's roots. "We liked the character of the property so we kept all of its original features and added more," says Jan. The couple preserved key aspects »»»

TOP Retro finds and white French country-style furniture are in keeping with the home's dual kitsch, vintage feel. **BOTTOM** A reupholstered seat in the dining room reveals one of Jan's key influences: butterflies and insects.

In the kitchen Jan's love of hearts has led to a huge collage of photos, postcards and old opera ticket stubs. An occasional bench provides the perfect display spot for a selection of her cushions.

The large kitchen provides a great space for the family to spend time together. Original features like the beams were kept.

"The keys displayed on the kitchen wall are family heirlooms. They were my great grandmother's. And the scissors are from my other great grandmother"

like the old quarry-tiled kitchen floor and the wooden beams. "We just wanted to keep it old because we like old things. And also because at the time we couldn't afford anything new," laughs Jan. "I sourced a lot of things from flee markets, car boot sales and architectural salvage yards."

Over the years the couple has added eclectic and modern finds, like a 200-year-old Mongolian sideboard from Liberty's antiques department, and a SMEG fridge. "When we got the fridge it was a toss up between the black and the red," says Jan. "But we'd got the black Aga and in the end I went for the red because I just love the colour – it's so nice and cheerful!"

Colour is one thing Jan is definitely not afraid of, from the lime green kitchen walls, to the pink living room, turquoise bathroom and silver-leaf dining room feature wall. Jan's home interior inspirations are as varied as her colour schemes. Fresh flowers fill the home, while bookcases and vintage show cabinets boast a book collection featuring titles from *French Home* to *Colour by Quant*, *Terence Conran's New House Book* to Francesco Da Mosto's *Francesco's Italy*. "Italy's our favourite place," says Jan. "We'd like to have a house there, either in Tuscany or Venice. It's fantastic – there's nowhere else like it for me, it's just so inspirational."

Meanwhile Jan, who originally trained in fashion design at Bolton, talks of loving haute British designers Alice Temperley, Vivienne Westwood, Matthew Williamson and Paul Smith but says her biggest influence, is her family. "The keys displayed on the kitchen wall are family keys," she explains. "They were my great grandmother's keys. And the scissors are from my other great grandmother. She was a seamstress, so we have sewing going through the family for generations. My grandmother was a dressmaker, my mum was a tailoress and then there's me. It's all followed through."

While the rest of the house is a rainbow of colour Jan and David's master bedroom and en-suite bathroom are a tranquil oasis. It's clear that Jan has a love of heirlooms and trinkets and the room has a distinctly fresh and French vintage feel to it, »»»

TOP The stunning black Aga is in keeping with the country feel of the kitchen.
BOTTOM Design buys from Liberty, like Fornasetti plates, ensure that Jan's home is the essence of style.

ENGLAND'S **DREAMING**

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TOP LEFT A vintage sewing machine is Jan's most recent second-hand find. **TOP RIGHT** Little touches like a retro suitcase placed at the end of the bed complete the bedroom in a simple yet effective way. **BOTTOM LEFT** A previous career in fashion inspired Jan to place a mannequin on the upstairs landing. **BOTTOM RIGHT** A free-standing bathtub finished with silver leaf makes an ideal bathroom statement piece.

"The bedroom's got a slight clouded effect because I wanted it to feel dreamy"

while at the same time accents of red and blue can be added as and when Jan chooses through accessories. "The room has been white for 12 years," she says. "But I keep the space fresh and update it with accessories. The room's also got a slight clouded effect because I wanted it to feel dreamy." The rest of the upstairs floor is made up of a spare room, office room, two children's bedrooms and bathroom.

With a life as hectic as Jan's a peaceful bedroom is an essential retreat. Although even when she's supposed to be sleeping her mind is constantly dreaming up new designs, as a result, she keeps a notebook next to her bed. "I carry a notebook with me everywhere," she says. "My original designs are small sketches for everything I do. I have so many of them – I'm thinking all the time of what I want to do next."

Next up for Jan, following the success of her Union Jack range is the launch of her 'I love London' collection and on the day we visited her home she had just received the samples of her hotly anticipated American collection. "We've both got fabulous flags," says Jan. "They're so graphic and striking that we've got to use them."

Wandering around Jan's unique home which proudly displays so many of her designs, and with her offices just next door in the adjacent stables it's hard to imagine her mind switching off from being Jan Constantine the designer maker to being Jan Constantine the home owner. "Can I switch off from work when I'm in the house? Can I heck," admits Jan. "Sometimes stress levels do get really high, but generally I just love it. I love my home and my life – they're both what I always wanted. I'm living my dream."

TOP A baby blue Roberts radio and a few personal pieces create a chic display on the bedside table. **MIDDLE** A clean white palette means the master bedroom provides the ideal rest space at the end of a hectic working day. **BOTTOM** In the dining room fresh flowers, a mirrored wardrobe and white chairs create a cool antiquated vibe.

ADDRESS BOOK:

The large, vintage glass jar in the bathroom, kitchen sideboard and Fornasetti kitchen wall plates and were sourced from Liberty.
Visit: www.liberty.co.uk or tel. 020 7573 9645.

The kitchen fridge is by SMEG.
Visit: www.smeguk.com or tel. 0844 557 9907.

The cushions, wall mounts and lavender pouches are by Jan Constantine.
Visit: www.janconstantine.com or tel. 01270 821 194.

KITCHEN »»»

We love Jan's kitchen – a classic Smeg fridge is a perfect addition to any home. Get the look with a striking bright red one too. Smeg fridge, £1,200, Smeg.

A few pretty Fornasetti plates displayed on the wall adds a design element to Jan's kitchen. For your quick fix log on to www.liberty.co.uk and buy online. Fornasetti plate, from a selection, £95, Liberty.

Jan loves flowers to give her home a fresh feel. She shops for retro vases in vintage shops, but we've found this vintage-style vase for you at John Lewis. Darlington Florabundance tulip vase, £42.

««« BEDROOM

Scatter some cushions as a finishing touch – we got a sneak preview of some pieces from Jan's new collection. 'I Love London' cushions, £80, Jan Constantine.

STEAL THEIR STYLE

Jan Constantine's home has a beautiful French vintage feel crossed with a quirky mix of her gorgeous contemporary textile accessories. You can achieve the same look by teaming a few well-sourced retro finds with some design classics. We've selected these buys to get you started... **For stockist details see page 128**

LIVING AREA »»»

In Jan's home colour is everything. Right down to this cute retro phone. Retro telephone, £59.99, www.iwantoneofthose.com.

Try updating your lounge by displaying some vintage trinkets on a console table. Normandy console table, £225, The French Bedroom Company.

BEDROOM »»»

The Constantines' master bedroom is a cool mix of tranquil whites and neutrals – perfect for relaxing after a hectic working day – with a hint of retro. Jan added this cool baby blue Roberts 'Revival' radio to her bedside table, which we adore. 'Revival' radio, £150, Roberts.

DINING AREA

A statement wardrobe can completely transform a room – and not just a bedroom; Jan has chosen a lovely mirrored cabinet in her dining room. Try it in your home with this similar one from The French Bedroom Company. Provencal mirrored wardrobe, £995, The French Bedroom Company.

««« DINING AREA

And don't forget to add a conversation starter – Jan has a cute collection of glasses on her mantelpiece and has filled them with tea lights for added sparkle! Wine glasses, £24 (mixed set of six), Cath Kidston.

ABOVE A bright red door makes a statement for visitors to Mark and Rachel's home.
RIGHT A cream Aga is the only part of the kitchen that Mark and Rachel wanted to keep – the rest was redesigned by Michael Wright Design into a modern, open-plan space.

A Dickensian Manor

A Grade II-listed Georgian home near Harrogate has been furnished in keeping with its Dickensian connections and features a modern twist on traditional design.

Words **Jennie Musgrove & Clare Birch** Photography **Eleri Griffiths**

LEFT Rachel has fallen in love with antique furniture, which complement the home's illustrious heritage.
BELOW The contemporary kitchen is the family's favourite place to spend time together.

Rachel decided to decorate the house herself – a huge challenge, particularly as the Woodwards' previous home was a converted barn filled with pine furniture

Mark and Rachel Woodward had been looking for a new home for some time when an estate agent unveiled one of Spofforth's hidden treasures; a former rectory which, in parts, dates back as far as 1312. "We used to live five miles away in Walton, so we knew the area really well," explained Mark. "We didn't know of this house though because it's got the wall all the way round it – even though it's in the middle of the village, you just wouldn't know it was here unless you came inside."

The couple fell in love with the property the moment they saw it. Its stately presence, large grounds and ideal location just ten minutes from Harrogate won them over straight away. But the most interesting aspect of the Georgian manor was that, up until 1998, it had belonged to Charles Dickens' great-great-grandson, Christopher Charles Dickens, who died in 1999. The Church sold the house in 1954 and it was eventually bought in the '60s by Dickens' ancestor.

The home doesn't just have literary connections, however; through the course of its eventful history it's been a chapel, a hospital, and was even used by the RAF during World War One. Perhaps unsurprisingly given its illustrious past, the home is said to be haunted. "A few people say they've seen a little girl, and some people have sensed things," said Rachel. "I'm a believer in these things and I'm sure that over the years, when you think of the amount of people who've lived here, so much has happened so there are probably some spirits."

After researching the home's history and finding out about its previous owners, Mark and Rachel started thinking about renovating and re-furnishing it. Instead of making changes straight away, they decided to live in the property with their three-year-old son Freddy for a year so they could find out how to best use the space. "It was good that we lived here for a year because we changed some »»

TOP LEFT Mark and Rachel inherited this cricket chest with the home; they suspect it once belonged to Charles Dickens.
BELOW LEFT An elegant chess board is the perfect piece for a stately home. **RIGHT** An extension to the kitchen/dining room means the space is now filled with natural light.

"Until you've lived in a house, knowing what to do with it is very difficult and if we'd changed it initially, we'd have done some things differently to how we did them"

of our ideas," said Mark. "Until you've lived in a house, knowing what to do with it is very difficult and if we'd changed it initially, we'd have done some things differently to how we did them." They enlisted the help of Ilkley-based architects Sense Of Space, who designed the kitchen area with a glazed extension to fill the space with natural light. The architects also redesigned the home's first floor layout to create a flowing, light-filled landing to connect the six bedrooms and Mark's office.

Rachel decided to plan the décor of the house herself – a huge challenge, particularly as the Woodwards' previous home was a converted barn filled with pine furniture, which was unsuitable for their new Georgian residence. "Decorating was a bit of a headache, but we got there eventually," said Mark.

Most of the home has been furnished in an ornate, traditional style in keeping with its heritage, but Mark and Rachel knew they wanted to mix the old with the new, so several rooms are more contemporary. The kitchen, by Michael Wright Design, has a soft, neutral colour scheme and is the couple's favourite room in the house. The main bathroom has also been furnished in a modern style and features a walk-in shower, large bath and his 'n' hers sinks. The most cutting-edge part of the property, however, is a home entertainment system that controls the audio, video and lighting in every room – something Mark wanted to have installed to ensure the home was future-proof.

The property's hidden gem is a bar above the garage, complete with pool table and widescreen TV with surround sound. "It was an unused flat, and just disgusting," said Rachel. "We didn't want to use it as a flat so we converted it into a bar. The builders enjoyed doing it more than the rest of the house – they let their creativity go wild!" Interestingly, the outbuilding the Woodwards now use as a bar »»»

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ADDRESS BOOK:

Ilkley-based architects Sense Of Space redesigned Mark and Rachel's home.
Visit: www.senseofspace.net, email: enquiries senseofspace.net or call: 01943 816 489.

The kitchen was designed and built by Michael Wright Design, Harrogate.
www.michaelwrightfurniture.co.uk

The tiles in the kitchen are from Lapicida, Harrogate.
www.lapicida.com

The home features several original Georgian fireplaces. There are also a few new ones, from Robert Aargard, Knaresborough.
www.robertaargard.co.uk

Rachel found chandeliers from BHS to complement the original ones which were left in the property by its previous owner.
www.bhs.co.uk

Most of the wallpaper throughout the home is from Cole and Son Ltd.
www.cole-and-son.com

All of Mark and Rachel's sofas were designed and made by MJ Upholstery, Leeds.
Tel. 0113 265 9600

The lighting and home controls are by Oldfield Lighting and Oldfield Home Controls.
www.oldfieldlighting.co.uk and ww.oldfieldhomecontrols.co.uk

The bathrooms are from Ripon Interiors, Ripon.
www.riponinteriors.co.uk

ABOVE A piano in the drawing room dates back to the 1800s and makes a very grand statement!
OPPOSITE PAGE MAIN Several oil paintings were left by the home's previous owners – Rachel wasn't keen on them when she first moved in but has grown to like their austere presence. **TOP RIGHT** The family bathroom is chic, contemporary and the best room in the house for relaxing in. **BOTTOM RIGHT** Mark and Rachel installed a bar in an outbuilding – the ideal place for entertaining guests!

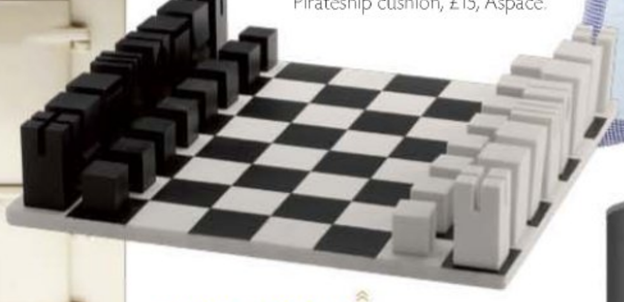
A GRAND PIANO FROM 1867, A GRANDFATHER CLOCK FROM THE 1700s AND A MAHOGANY VICTORIAN DINING TABLE ARE JUST SOME OF THE ANTIQUE PIECES CREATING FOCAL POINTS THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

and garage was once attached to the main property, but a fire in the early 1900s destroyed a large chunk of the home which was never repaired.

Back in the main building, antique pieces stand alongside prints and pieces of art which Mark and Rachel have collected over the years. "I was never a fan of antiques until I moved here," said Rachel. "My mum and dad have a lot in their house though, so I've always appreciated them." A grand piano from 1867, a grandfather clock from the 1700s and a mahogany Victorian dining table are just some of the antique pieces creating focal points throughout the house. A cricket box in the entrance hall was made for the coronation of Queen Victoria and belonged to Christopher Dickens – Mark and Rachel think it might have once been the property of Charles Dickens. "If the *Antiques Roadshow* come to Harrogate I'll whip that down," said Rachel. "It could be a little find!"

The artwork adorning the walls of the house adds a fun and personal touch, and includes paintings by Rachel's sister and a 3D depiction of New York, bought to celebrate Mark and Rachel's engagement in 2001. "We don't collect art from a point of view of it being worth a lot; it's just if we like it and it fits in with the house," explained Mark. "And as we're trying to keep the house quite contemporary, putting the odd new picture up gives us the opportunity to mix the old and new together. We love the old stuff but we don't want the whole house to look dated; it's a fine balance trying to get that right."

After two years of planning, renovating and decorating, Mark and Rachel have finally created their ideal home and plan to stay in The Old Rectory for the foreseeable future. "Everything has been made for comfort and has a really homely feel," said Rachel. "Your home is somewhere you spend a lot of time, and I like that visitors feel comfortable here as well."



KIDS' BEDROOM

In three-year-old Freddy's room a cute appliqué cushion adds a fun touch. This one just like it from Apsace and would be a welcome addition in any little boy's room! Pirateship cushion, £15, Aspace.

KITCHEN

An Aga is a must-have in any country kitchen. We love this classic cream version. Three-oven AGA, from £7,260, Aga.

LIVING ROOM

Add a bit of games fun with a classic boardgame like chess. This modern take is from Habitat. 'KARL' chess board, £75.

DINING ROOM

In the dining room glass-based lamps are the perfect finishing touch. We've found you this lookalike one. Fluted Glass Ball Lamp, £69, Marks & Spencer.

STEAL THEIR STYLE

Rachel and Mark's gorgeous Harrogate manor house feels comfortable and homely but contemporary – they've mixed ornate, traditional pieces with antiques and more contemporary finds. To help you achieve a look like theirs in your home we've put together these similar buys. **For stockist details see page 128**

HALLWAY

In the hallway fantastic baroque pieces such as the chaise long and a glamorous table and mirror make a bold style statement. We've found you this similar mirror to add a French-flair to your home. Baroque carved mirror, £495, The French Bedroom Company.

BATHROOM

Flowers bring a natural touch to any room – even a bathroom. Just add a cute vase like this blue and white one, which is very similar to the vase in Rachel and Mark's en-suite bathroom. 'Etruscan' vase, £39.95, Lovers of Blue and White.

BEDROOM

In the bedroom a simplistic blue and cream pallet serves as the perfect backdrop for the vintage pieces Rachel and Mark love. Add a hint of vintage to your bedroom with this similar Victorian-style dressing table and mirror. Victorian dressing table, £295; mirror, £150, An Angel At My Table.

A simple occasional chair is a key bedroom staple. This alternative cute cream one is perfect for tucking away under the dressing table as well as placing in a corner to add a focal point. Cream French dining chair, £156, Sweetpea & Willow.

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Alan and Jenny's new build has a very natural colour palette and utilises smooth, clean lines and subtle curves to break up the harsh, long, rectangle barn shape.

Words **Caroline Jones** Photography **Eleri Griffiths**

Architect's Delight

An award-winning new build on the Norfolk Broads was designed to complement its surrounding environment but remains an exceptionally contemporary home.

"We thought we would design the property upside down so that we would get the most of the view," says Alan Rogers looking out from his kitchen at the panoramic vistas of the Norfolk countryside that span both sides of his home.

Alan and his wife Jenny had been living on England's east coast in the small village of Reedham for several years when a friend discovered a dilapidated barn on the banks of the River Yare. "Jenny actually didn't like the house we were in before," says Alan. "I said I didn't mind moving as long as we stayed in Reedham. It took us quite a while to find a new place and in the end it was a site for building on."

The couple, who run a management consultancy agency, spend half the week living in London and use their Norfolk property as a weekend retreat. When they saw the run-down barn and its location, the couple knew it was just what they were looking for and asked architects Knox Bhavan to look into renovating and restoring the barn. "But we couldn't rebuild the barn because it was too feeble and falling down," says Alan.

Instead the couple decided to build a new home on the site with the assistance of Knox architect Mary-Lou Arscott. Alan and Jenny had met Mary-Lou several years earlier when she redesigned their London property for them. "It was one of those weird things that happens," explains Alan. "Jenny was a management consultancy coach for Mary-Lou and Mary-Lou didn't have much cash at the time so we did a swap. We had an Edwardian house in London and Mary-Lou redesigned our back garden for us in return for the coaching.

"Then when we moved properties in London, we decided we'd buy a space and redesign it and we got her to do that. She did a really nice job and so she was the obvious person when it came to designing and building this property. It was Mary-Lou's idea to make it a wooden house." »»»

"It took nine months to build and before that it took about a year for us to get all the planning permission"

ABOVE The kitchen along with the other main living areas sit upstairs so that Alan and Jenny can enjoy the panoramic views of the Norfolk Broads through the home's large landscape windows.

Alan, Jenny and the architects decided on a barn-like house with a timber-clad exterior which would be in keeping with its environment and surrounding buildings: windmills, boat houses and barns. "Barns and boathouses often used to be made in wood," says Alan. "It's Siberian larch and it's not treated at all. It's like thatch; you only have to do it every 70 years." The larch wood, which is hardwearing and rot resistant, used on the exterior of the home, will eventually weather to a silvery grey.

Alan and Jenny, who have two sons, have now been living in the completed home for three-and-a-half years, but as with all new builds the project was a long-term one. "It took nine months to build and before that it took about a year for us to get all the planning permission," says Alan.

The new-build process was one that Alan enjoyed however; it was also to prove essential in the home's bespoke nature. Alan suffers from chronic arthritis and around the time they acquired the property he became wheelchair-bound. "There's a process with a new build where you sit down and talk very generally about the site and then gradually, over a period of about six months, you break it down to smaller and smaller details. You start with where you put the bedroom and the kitchen, that sort of general thing, then you move down to where do you like your sockets and so on," explains Alan. "So Mary-Lou went through all of that with us step-by-step, she's very painstaking about your lifestyle, and then there was the added element of the chair."

Once all details had been discussed work got underway on the property; Mary-Lou met with the general contractor for the project, Gary Hayes from Willow Builders Ltd, every Monday morning. "You get a really good relationship between the builder, client and architect because you have to have trust," says Alan. "The architect has to trust the builder and the client has to trust the architect. The client needs to give the architect a chance to express herself – I certainly did that with Mary-Lou."

Already living in the village, Alan would occasionally pop over to check on the build's progress, but he was never fully prepared for the final result. "The first time I went upstairs was the day we moved in because the stairs and the lift were the last thing to be put in, so I didn't know how it was going to look. I'd pictured what it would be like but when I got up there, there was a tear in my eye because it was so wonderful." »»»

The left-hand walls of the ground floor hallway are painted with colours picked out from the garden and landscape: blue to represent the sky, yellow for the cornfields, green for the marina and pink from the garden plants. The right-hand wall is actually painted white, but when the sun comes round the colours from the left wall reflect onto the right creating a subtle changing palette throughout the day.

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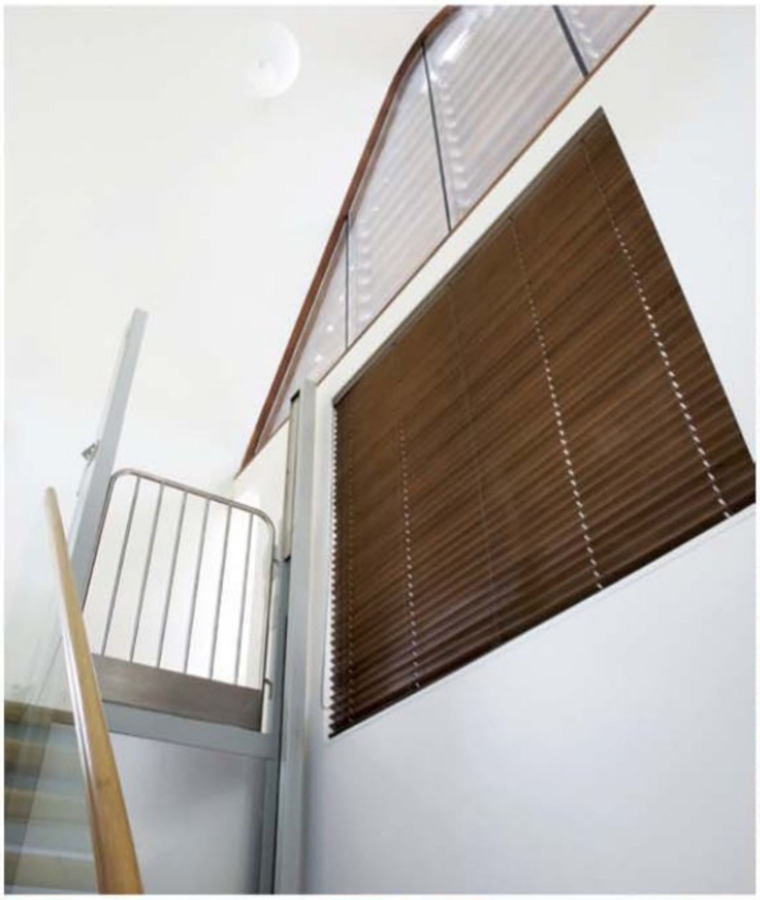

TOP LEFT The home, which incorporates a staircase and lift, has been carefully designed to allow Alan and his wheelchair total mobility. **TOP RIGHT** Light-reflecting glass around the eaves adds to the build's aesthetic appeal. **BOTTOM LEFT** Holly Barn has an acre of land that was landscaped to create a meadow effect. **BOTTOM RIGHT** In the living area colour has been added to the neutral palette with carefully chosen accessories.

ADDRESS BOOK:

The property was designed by Knox Bhavan Architects.
Visit: www.knoxbhavan.com for further details.

Holly Barn's builder and general contractor was Gary Hayes at Willow Builders Ltd.
For more information tel. 01986 891 414.

For the exterior cladding the Siberian larch shiplap boarding was supplied by Pattrick & Thompsons Ltd, Norfolk; the metal Rheinzink long strip sheet roofing was supplied by Anglia Lead Roofing, Norfolk. **Tel. 01603 626 856.**

The Iroko sliding windows and doors were manufactured by Riverside Joinery.
Visit: www.riverside-joinery.co.uk for more details or tel. 01603 624 858.

Alan and Jenny's garden was landscaped by Declan Buckley of Declan Buckley Associates.
Visit: www.buckleydesignassociates.com for more information.

> "The first time I went upstairs was the day we moved in – there was a tear in my eye because it was so wonderful"

ABOVE LEFT With an exterior of Siberian larch the home won the Wood Award for private projects. **ABOVE RIGHT** China and glassware add a personal touch.

The upstairs of the two-storey build comprises a kitchen/dining area, living room, office, en-suite bathroom and master bedroom. The 38 large windows that run the length of the building offer panoramic views of the river, village church, marina and the vast Norfolk Broads. The rooms are partitioned by 7-ft high walls and topped with glass extensions to the ceiling. The ground floor meanwhile accommodates an entrance hall, playroom, four small bedrooms and two bathrooms.

A lot of the design features of the house are dual-function; while the curves of the window shelves are wheelchair friendly they're also aesthetically pleasing. "The idea behind the round bits between the windows was to act as a break against the harsh rectangle," says Alan. "Because it all echoes the long barn shape."

Upon completion the build went on to win a clutch of design and architecture awards. "We kept saying things casually," says Alan. "Joking, 'It really deserves a prize,' little thinking that it actually would win one." Holly Barn in fact won far more than one, scooping the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) National Award 2006, RIBA Manser Medal 2006, The Wood Council Award 2006, Civic Trust Award Commendation 2007 and the *Grand Designs*' Best New Build 2007.

As well as being an architectural delight Alan and Jenny's home also houses a few design classics, such as a set of Eames chairs. "Interestingly we bought the chairs in different places. We got a couple of them from a car wash – the guys were sitting on them in-between washing cars!" laughs Alan. "We saw them here and there. If people know what they are, they're a couple of hundred pounds each, but if they don't know what they are they're a tenner."

The home also boasts an acre of garden that was designed from scratch. "We were interested in having a meadow effect," says Alan. While on the north side of the property a host of fruit and vegetables grow: grapes, raspberries, gooseberries, currants, rhubarb and strawberries, plus potatoes, onions, leeks, broad beans and runner beans.

"The home is one of those places where you don't feel tense," says Alan. "You just feel relaxed. It's very restorative after a week working away." And it's easy to see why. "I love watching the sunrise in the morning," he adds. "There's a really wonderful sunset too. These skies are terrific. They change every five minutes."

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DINING AREA »»»

For a complete classic, the ideal way to add a bit of contemporary style to any dining area is with a Vitra Eames chair. £179, Purves & Purves.

Jenny and Alan's blue fruit bowl creates a bold colour statement against the white and stainless steel kitchen. We've found a similar one for you at House of Fraser. 'Grace' fruit bowl, £12.95.

KITCHEN »»»

Work surfaces are the ideal place to add a fun element to your kitchen. Display a quirky kettle on yours too like this fab one by Alessi. 'Il Conico' kettle, £109, Alessi.

STEAL THEIR STYLE

Jenny and Alan's home excels in its simplicity: from the open-plan living areas to the carefully thought out use of colour on the ground floor hall walls. Clean lines and understated design ensure that key furniture pieces can be shown off to their best. We've cherry picked these buys to help you get the look. **For stockist details see page 128**

««« LIVING AREA

If you want your lounge to be stylish and practical like Alan and Jenny's try a simple occasional side table. Get your hands on the same one as theirs from Nest. 'Classicon' adjustable table, £710.48.

LIVING AREA

Using a sideboard is a great way to focus attention on your favourite pieces. Jenny and Alan's cute tea set is adorable, so we've scoured the shops to find you the best replica! Barbara Barry pearl strand teacup, £24, Wedgewood.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY »»»

To replicate the lighting look try globe-shaped pendants – they give out an abundance of light but don't overpower a space. We found this gorgeous similar version from Rume. Bubble lamp ball, from £295.

««« DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY

With a neutral palette adding hints of colour or a statement wall is a great idea. If you want to achieve the look we love these alternative paints from Pots of Paint, which you can get in four similar shades. We love 'Pots of Heaven' paint in Sea Green and Garter Blue, 'Pots of Love' in Jonquil pink and 'Pots of Gold' in Patent Yellow, prices start from £29.50 for 2.5l, Pots of Paint.

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Woodland Blues

Bluebell Cottage Gardens in rural Cheshire is the perfect place to spend a lazy afternoon this summer. *Concept For Living* did just that and discovered the story behind the land.

Words **Jennie Musgrove** Photography **Eleri Griffiths**

"It's quite nice because we get people wandering in and perching up for the afternoon during a hailstorm"

Bluebell Cottage Gardens and Lodge Lane Nursery is a beautiful hidden gem tucked away in a quiet corner of the Weaver Valley, Cheshire. During spring, its bluebell woodlands put on a spectacular show and in summer the herbaceous borders come to life in a whirlwind of colour and foliage. Backing on to the Trent and Mersey Canal, the land features a garden and plant nursery, a three-acre wildflower meadow and ancient bluebell woodland. The nursery is an RHS partner nursery, specialising in hardy herbaceous perennials, but it's a far cry from the commercialism and large-scale production of corporate plant shops. Owners Sue and David Beesley deliberately avoided turning Bluebell Cottage Gardens into a one-stop garden shop, preferring to let visitors spend some time exploring the scenery and picking up new skills. "It's never going to be some kind of Wyvale," says Sue, describing the cosy tearoom which offers self-service tea and coffee, locally-made cakes and Cheshire ice cream. "The idea of this little place is that you make your own tea, sit down, read some books. It's quite nice because we get people wandering in and perching up for the afternoon during a hailstorm."

In keeping with this informal set up, Sue has added a new 'demonstration vegetable patch', complete with raised beds featuring classic English vegetables, permanent fruits and salad. Here, visitors are free to take notes, swap tips and generally learn more about vegetable growing. "We just show people round and exchange ideas, and people can discuss their own vegetable plots," says Sue. "I think it's especially useful for relatively novice veg growers. You might want someone to show you around their allotment, but how do you go about that – if you walk onto an allotment there's usually all these people looking fierce and busy! So we've set up ours as a place to stand around and chat about vegetable growing. We've also got a little shop with some basic seeds, plants and organic fertiliser."

Having spent nearly 30 years working in IT and business management, in 2006 Sue decided to pursue her love of gardening and enrolled on a horticulture course at Reaseheath College, Nantwich. Later in the same year, she won the »»»

ADDRESS BOOK:

Bluebell Cottage Gardens & Lodge Lane Nursery is open Wednesday to Sunday and on Bank Holidays, from 10am to 5pm until September 2009. To plan your visit or to find out about the education and leisure events held throughout the year, visit: www.lodgelanenursery.co.uk, email: info@lodgelane.co.uk or call 01928 713 718.

Sue is creating a garden for this year's RHS Show at Tatton Park, from 22 to 26 July. For further information about the show, visit: www.rhs.org.uk/whatson/shows/tattonpark2009.

Find out more about Reaseheath College's horticulture courses at: www.reaseheath.ac.uk.

"When we came to look at it, I wouldn't say it was derelict but it was quite run down. Then I won the competition, we bought this place, and it's been chaos ever since!"

BBC's Gardener of the Year competition and it was during the contest that Sue made the decision to leave the world of computing and concentrate on building a career in horticulture. Sue and David discovered Lodge Lane Nursery while she was searching for plants for the competition. "When we came to look at it, I wouldn't say it was derelict but it was quite run down," she says. "Then I won the competition, we bought this place, moved in, and it's been chaos ever since!"

Since moving into the cottage in February 2007, Sue and David have transformed the overgrown land into a flourishing garden and nursery. Apple, cherry and pear trees can be found in a canal-side orchard, and the 1.5-acre garden includes a pond, a rockery and an abundance of colourful flowers.

A circular wall encloses an area next to the cottage, the size of a typical suburban back garden, where Sue uses her skills to illustrate what can be done in a relatively small amount of space. "It's the size of most people's back garden," she says. "I use it as a way of encouraging people to do away with creating straight borders around square gardens. Because in the summer you can't see the wall, it's filled with flowers and foliage – it's really pretty."

Looking to the future, determined Sue has two main ambitions for the gardens and nursery: firstly, to develop the demonstration vegetable plots; and secondly to create a new exotics garden, inspired by late gardener and writer, Christopher Lloyd. "Sometimes people have a very English concept of what a garden ought to be," she says. "One of my instincts is to have a tropical garden with plants like bananas. One of the reasons I really love Christopher Lloyd's garden in East Sussex is that he ripped out the rose garden, planted it with exotics and broke all the rules. He'd plant pink next to orange and say, 'Come on then, tell me it doesn't work'."

It's this progressive way of gardening that drives Sue to keep changing and evolving the gardens; creating new vistas and altering planting arrangements to ensure a sense of continuity and flow. An archway to one of the garden's many sections is inscribed with the words 'Cette Vie M'aime', meaning 'This life loves me'. The site is so full of colour and such a place of tranquillity, that it's hard to see how anyone visiting Bluebell Cottage Gardens could think otherwise.

GROW YOUR OWN!

Make the most of your own garden with Sue's expert advice for growing vegetables and exotics.

WHAT ARE THE EASIEST VEGETABLES TO GROW?

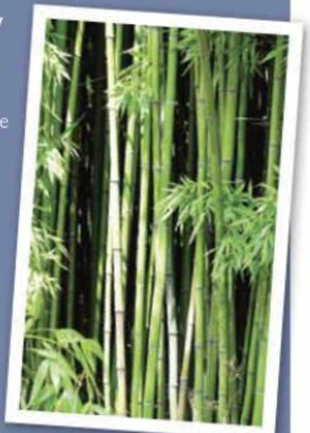
Radishes are really easy to grow and will be ready to harvest in less than a month. Just sow them thinly and cover with a little fine soil. Fresh, young radishes are much less spicy than from the supermarket. Spinach is easy too and can be eaten raw in salads when young, or steamed. Don't worry about sowing rows, just sprinkle some seeds in a small area and pick off the leaves when they're ready. Dwarf French beans and courgettes are quick to grow too – it's best to start them off in pots indoors in early May and plant out when they're a few inches high. Allow lots of space for courgette plants as they get quite big!

HOW CAN YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF A VEGETABLE PLOT?

Most veg can be sowed much closer than shown on the packet, especially if you want to pick young, tender crops. Sowing some seeds each week, such as carrots, lettuce and beetroot will keep a succession of produce through the year. Some plants can be slotted in after others have finished – we sow our leeks in April and plant them when the broad beans have finished. And our autumn/winter cabbages go in after the new potatoes have been lifted.

WHAT IF YOU ONLY HAVE A SMALL GARDEN?

Raised beds are a very good way to use a small space. They don't need to be raised much, it's really about defining a small space for veg. We use 1m x 1m wooden framed squares and pack in as much as we can.
Alternatively carrots grow really well in pots, potatoes are perfect in old compost bags or sacks and salads and leafy crops work perfectly in small wooden trays. Or try just sowing a few seeds amongst your ornamental plants. Runner beans look very pretty in flower climbing up a pergola and Rainbow Chard stems look fabulously colourful in borders.



WHICH EXOTIC PLANTS IS IT POSSIBLE TO GROW IN BRITAIN'S TEMPERAMENTAL CLIMATE?

Most truly 'exotic' plants aren't hardy and do need protection in our climate. But there are some plants which look exotic but are perfectly hardy. These include Black Bamboo (Phyllostachys nigra), the huge-leaved Petasites japonicas, and the ornamental Rhubarbs – Rheum palmatum.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO GROW EXOTICS WITHOUT A GREENHOUSE?

It's always a bit chancy to risk more tender plants outside all year – it's not so much the cold, as the wet and cold that gets to them in a UK winter. We keep most of ours in an unheated polytunnel, mostly to protect them from excess wet. The woody plants such as Paulownia, Butia capitata and Dicksonia antarctica can be protected outside using straw piled up around the bases and wrapping in fleece or hessian. The banana, Musa basjoo, is actually a herbaceous perennial, so even if you lose the main stem to frost, it usually re-shoots from the base to give you new plants next year if it has been well protected. With most of the softer plants such as Cannas and Colocasias it does pay to dig them up and put them out of the reach of frosts for the winter. A garage will do!

WHEN SHOULD YOU GO ABOUT PLANTING THEM?

Planting out depends on your region's last frost date. I planted our exotic garden in late May here in Cheshire. This may seem late, but there is still plenty of time for them to grow and produce their peak performance from July onwards. If they go out too early a cold spell will check their growth and leave them susceptible to attack from predators and pathogens.

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LABEL OF LOVE »»»

If you're often left wondering where you planted what but want to avoid putting white plastic plant labels in your garden flowerbeds fear not, we've found these chic natural slate labels from Cox & Cox – just grab some chalk, write on the plant name and place firmly in the ground! Slate plant labels, £14 (set of 6), Cox & Cox.

FUN FACTOR

To encourage people to wander around their garden Sue and David have added wander-tempting elements such as paths, arbours and water features. Try adding an 'interest' element to your outdoor space with a quirky sign. We love this one from Cloth Ears that can be hung anywhere and is guaranteed to add that little fun factor every garden needs! 'Garden' arrow sign, £6.99, Cloth Ears.

STEAL THEIR STYLE

Sue and David Beesley's Bluebell Cottage Gardens is a fantastic balance of pretty flowers, tranquil rest spots and cute plant nurseries. The couple have thought about everything from wander-tempting elements to quirky signs. To help you get the look in your garden we've picked out these brilliant buys. **For stockist details see page 128**

PERFECT PLANTER

Well-considered accessories are just as important in your garden as they are in your home. This large planter from Deroma has a rustic feel and would be perfect in any garden. Sandhal pot, £64.99, Deroma.

««« REST SPOT BENCH

In any garden it's always nice to take some time to sit and admire the view and what better way to do this than take a seat. For a stylish alternative to Sue and David's seating options try this contemporary number by Sweetpea & Willow. Lutyen bench (two seater), £290, Sweetpea & Willow.

PRETTY POTS

If you lack outdoor space or even if you're just keen to bring a bit of the outdoors in these tasty herb pots are ideal for any kitchen window ledge. Grow whatever herb you desire and have them on-hand in your kitchen for when you're cooking up a delicious meal. Herb pots tray, £18, Garden Trading.

««« GROW YOUR OWN

Take a leaf out of Sue and David's book and start growing your own with this easy kit from Green Stamp. It comes complete with growing pots, compost discs, seeds and a booklet containing everything you need to know about homegrown vegetables. And the best thing is, the whole lot is eco-friendly! Vegetable Patch Home Growing Kit, £12.99, Green Stamp.

««« GARDEN TWINE

At *Concept* we love it when necessities get pretty and this tin of twine is a prime example – just because it's practical, doesn't mean it can't be stylish. Use the twine to tie climbing plants to a trellis then leave the tin out for visitors to admire your cute garden accessories. 'Garden Twine' tin, £5, Marks & Spencer.

PETER CARLSON

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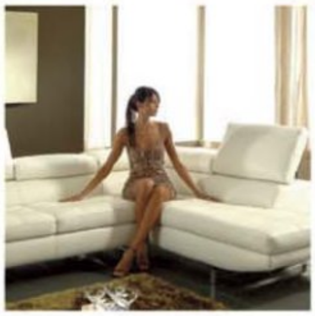

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FANCY FLOORING

Are you facing a flooring dilemma? With so much choice it can be hard to know what's the best option. This month we bring you valuable tips from the people who know, alongside a selection of eye-catching flooring ideas for the home.

LUXURIOUS **LAMINATE**

If you're after the dark-stained or light wood effect you won't be stuck for choice with our selection of eye-catching laminate ideas, they are definitely worth a walk on!

Floorboards, from £71 per metre sq, Dinesen.

'Novilon' flooring, £25.99 per metre sq, Forbo Flooring.

Classic Light Grey Oiled Oak, £16.99 per metre sq, Quick-Step.

ECO **HEAVEN**

Do you want to maintain the eco credentials in your flooring but worried that you may have to compromise on style? There's no need, all can be obtained with our hand-picked collection of eco-friendly flooring ideas.

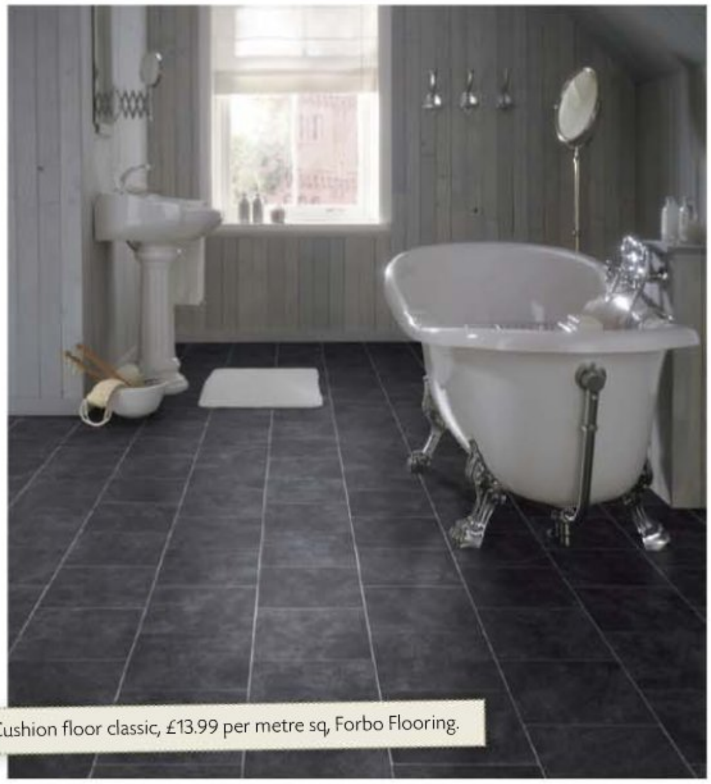
'Lubelska' reclaimed bricks, £124.38 per metre sq, Fired Earth.

'Marmoleum Click' flooring, £34.99 per metre sq, Forbo Flooring.

Reclaimed Jerusalem stone, £293.75 per metre sq, Indigenous.

STYLISH **STONE**

If you're after that country feel or simply want to add a hint of style in your contemporary kitchen then stone is your best option with its sleek appearance it makes the perfect flooring option by adding a wow factor.



Cushion floor classic, £13.99 per metre sq, Forbo Flooring.

Irish Stone, £28 per square metre, RAK Ceramics.

African brown limestone, £141 per metre sq, De Ferranti.

Architectural stone, £179.69 per metre sq, Fired Earth.

Burgundy flagstones, £146.87 per metre sq, Indigenous.

SLEEK **SLATING**

For the ultimate crisp, contemporary look in the kitchen there's no better choice than slating, so don't look any further than this trio...

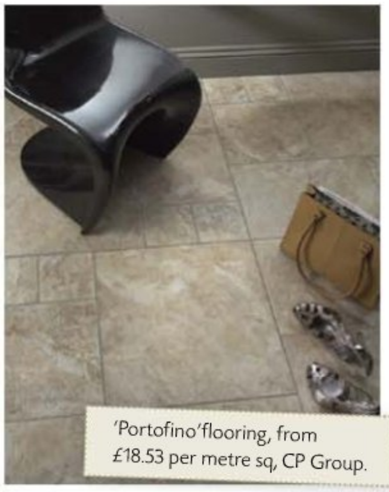
Silver blue slate, £39.25 per metre sq, Fired Earth.

Square slate floor, from £23.50 per metre sq, Indigenous.

'Oyster' slate flooring, £112 per metre sq, CP Group.

TILE **STYLE**

Tiling is very versatile and can be purchased in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours, why compromise on style when the options are endless?



'Portofino' flooring, from £18.53 per metre sq, CP Group.

'Encaustic' tiles, £5.75 each, Fired Earth.

Cushion floor classic in terracota, £13.99 per metre sq, Forbo Flooring.

EXPERT **ADVICE**

Read our expert advice to discover all the latest top tips when planning your flooring.

How do you make sure you get the best out of your flooring?

To get the very best out of your floor it's always important to follow the installation and maintenance instructions for that particular product. While it might be tempting to speed up installation by cutting corners, there's no doubt that this will be detrimental to the lifespan and appearance of your floor. So, if tiles require sealing, it's vital that this is done correctly to ensure that your floor is protected from stains, particularly in high traffic areas such as kitchens and hallways.
Caroline Gow, Tile Category Manager for Fired Earth.

Make sure the wood is prepared properly by drying it out and preparing the surface so when it is laid it won't move. You also need to ensure you finish it correctly – it should be sealed to keep water out, or simply waxed to allow natural ageing and wear and tear. The wonderful thing about reclaimed flooring is that it has the patina of age that just improves with time and wear.
Drummond Shaw, Director of Drummonds.

It is recommended to have your flooring treated with INTEC, a stain inhibitor which helps reduces the impact of liquid spills. Always use entrance doormats to control the amount of dirt tracked in and vacuum regularly using a suction-only appliance, for natural fibre flooring.
Lorna Haigh, Marketing Manager for Alternative Flooring.

What steps should be taken to ensure the right flooring has been chosen?

It's a good idea to speak to showroom staff about your requirements and to make sure that the tiles you love the look of will also be fit for purpose. Opt for hard-wearing tiles in high-traffic areas, and think about things like maintenance. For example, terracotta flooring will need to be protected with coats of wax polish at regular intervals.
Caroline Gow, Tile Category Manager for Fired Earth.

You need to think about the style of the room and property you are trying to create or restore or build etc. The first step for matching the colour of the room and the floor is to choose the right age of wood. Secondly you have to decide how to fit it (braddles/screwing and plugging/secret nailing etc). Lastly you need to decide how to finish it and if you want to stain it or darken it.
Drummond Shaw, Director of Drummonds.

It is always recommended to refer to the manufacturer's suitability guidelines. It is important to consider the amount of foot traffic your flooring is going to take once fitted and this will help you decide whether your choice of flooring is suitable. It is also important to consider the room's ambiance prior to fitting; a damp room is not suitable for most natural plant fibre products and rooms which attract sunlight can lead to the fading of some floor coverings.
Lorna Haigh, Marketing Manager for Alternative Flooring.

Are there any specific finishes that work better in a particular room?

Again, it's important to think about maintenance and to consider how hard wearing the floor needs to be. When choosing flooring for bathrooms and, in particular, wet rooms, look out for flooring that's not going to be slippery when wet.
Caroline Gow, Tile Category Manager for Fired Earth.

For bathrooms and kitchens, which will get 'spillages' it is best to seal the flooring to prevent water damage. Sealants allow the floor to be mopped to clean up any spillages. In dining or formal rooms a highly polished finish is great, waxing can create this and we recommend investing in a polishing machine to keep it buffed up.
Drummond Shaw, Director of Drummonds.

The general rule of thumb is that the smaller the room, the lighter the floor. This will help to create a feeling of space and will allow warmer colours to be used on walls and in furnishings.
Philiep Caryn, International Communications Manager for Quick-Step.

Is there any specific flooring that should be used in either a contemporary or traditional home?

Traditional looking products such as flagstones, terracotta or a beautiful limestone floor with a tumbled edge are likely to be more in keeping with a period property. They'll look as if they've been part of your home for years, and they'll usually look even better as time goes by. Porcelain and slate can have a crisp, architectural look that's particularly in keeping with a contemporary home.
Caroline Gow, Tile Category Manager for Fired Earth.

Traditional homes would do best to stick to wider more rustic-effect laminate planks, these give a more lived-in feel. In terms of wood effects, narrow and dark planks give a real elegant feel although light and wide floors can give a fresh and funky appeal.
Philiep Caryn, International Communications Manager for Quick-Step.

For that contemporary look combine smooth floors with the texture, use stripey carpets on the stairs as a statement within the home. Work with different flooring textures throughout the home: wool carpet in the bedrooms, sisal in the hallways and main living areas.
Lorna Haigh, Marketing Manager for Alternative Flooring.

62 SUMMER BUYS YOU'LL LOVE

HOME SWEET HOME

Check out our cute adornments and accessorises for the home and garden. This summer there's a sizzling selection of beautiful buys to tempt you.

For stockists see page 128.

01

Floral cushion, £15, Next.

02

Wire bowl, £39, BoConcept.

03

Reversible wool throw, £45, Country Cream.

04

'Murello' frames, £7.50 each, Paperchase.

05

'LSA' tea light, £15 each, Nest.

06

Floral storage boxes,
£25 for set of 3, Laura Ashley.

07

Summer rug, from
£277, Woven Ground.

08

'Nuala' purple vase,
£44.95, Beth Stevens.

09

Clock, £28.99, Lisbeth Dahl.

10

Stacking bowls, 4 for £31, Ella's Kitchen Company.

11

'Zassenhaus' salt and pepper mills, £38.75 each, Gilberts.

12

Enamelled colanders, £21.15 each, Amaroni.

13

Summer cannisters, £15 for set of 3, Next.

14

Summer dining plates, from £2, John Lewis.

15

'Melamine' spoons, P.O.A, Rice.

16

Happy hour jug, £13.20, Guzzini.

17

First aid box, £6.50, Paperchase.

18

Oriental Carafe, £29.50, Nina Campbell.

19

Heat accessories, from £4.40, Le Creuset.

20

Rose bowls, £27 for 4, Chomette.

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concept for LIVING

Just ask!

BEACH LIFE

21
'Jacquard' beach towel,
£6.99, Sainsbury's.

22
Large beach bag,
£29.96, Lakeland.

23
Door hanger,
£10.95, Angelic Hen.

24
'Parrot' cool bag,
£12.40, Amaroni.

25
Wind break,
£50, Garden Trading.

26
Dot beach mat,
£39, Scandi Living.

27
Strawberry cool bag,
£30, Cath Kidston.

28
4-person picnic hamper,
£45, Next.

29
Suede picnic rug,
£63, Joanna Wood.

KIDS' PLAY

30

Children's suitcase, £8, Store.

31

'Rosendahl' monkey, £105, Nest.

32

Playhouse, £30, Lula Sapphire.

33

Cheeky cutlery,
£10 for set of 4, Maxwell & Williams.

34

Snack trays, £3.50 each, Paperchase.

35

'The Healthy Veg Gang', £3.94, Lakeland.

36

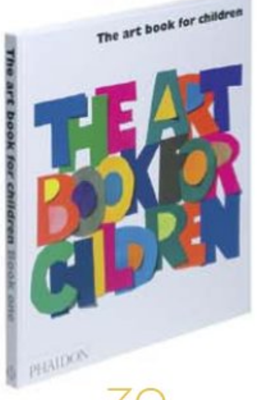
Apple lunch tin, £6.50 each, Colloco.

37

Cavendish croquet set, £292, John Lewis.

38

Knitted owl,
£12.99, Gift to Go.



39

The Art Book For Children,
£12.95, The Lollipop Shoppe.

40

Gift set,
£12, Mamas & Papas.

41

Kids' bug collecting set,
£3.99, magnifier, £2.49, Sainsbury's.

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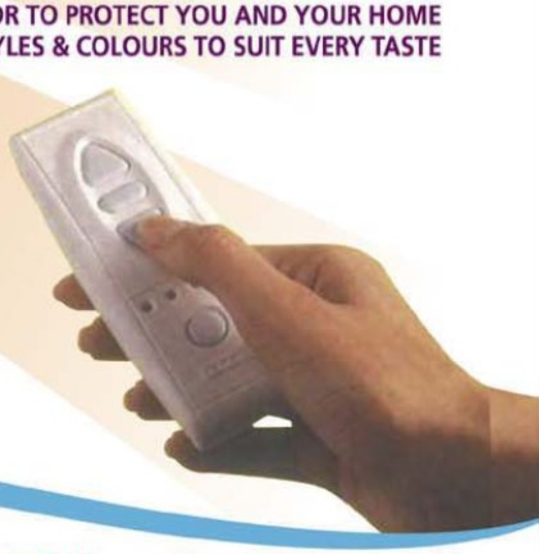

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42

'Baiana' hammock,
£109.80, Drinkstuff.

43

Enamel Herb pots,
£9.50, Marks & Spencer.

44

Summer seat pads,
£5.99 each, Dunelm Mill.

45

Trowel and fork, £4.99 each, Joanna Wood.

46

Floral bunting,
£12.99, The Contemporary Home.

47

Paper lanterns, £10 for 3, Next.

48

Multi floral watering can, £8, Paperchase.

GARDEN STARS

49

'Spike' bamboo lantern,
£26, Garden Trading.

50

Garden accessories,
3 for £18, Pussy Home Boutique.

51

Gold sun umbrella,
£180, Burford.

52

'Alessi' watering can,
£25, Heal's.

53

Laptop bag,
£12.75, Paperchase.

54

Pens, £2.99 each,
Lisbeth Dahl.

55

Luggage tag, £6.85,
Bombay Duck.

56

Passport cover,
£14.95, Colloco.

57

Passport cover and tags set,
£10, Next.

58

Map deck chair, £60,
Pussy Home Boutique.

59

Emma Bridgewater passport holder,
£12.99, Hiccup Gifts.

GREAT ESCAPE

60

'Enya' bag, £23, Scandi Living.

61

Passport cover, £8.81,
Bombay Duck.

62

Scanglobe, £129.26,
Amaroni.

Daisy...... Daisy......

elephant designer beanbags

Oversized and generously filled, Elephant beanbags definitely live up to their name and are a cost-effective way of injecting funky colour and designer prints into kids' bedrooms, family rooms, games rooms and teenage dens. Go for a single splash or group two or three together for a paint-box effect – Elephants look even better in herds! These versatile seating solutions are great for parties and sleepovers, providing soft support for all the family in durable, wipe-clean fabrics. Better yet, the Jumbos weigh in at a mighty 140cm x 180cm.

Visit www.elephantbeanbags.co.uk to view our full range, request colour swatches and order. Or call 01386 423760

www.elephantbeanbags.co.uk elephant™

FRESH FURNISHING IDEAS

Sit back and relax in one of our delightful daybeds or sleek sofas, with a variety of colours and upholstery there's sure to be a piece of indoor/outdoor furniture here for you.

'Orbit' range, from £345 for a side table by Dedon, Leisure Plan.

INDOOR NEUTRALS

This summer indoor furniture pieces are all about neutral colours and pure textures. It's time to get back to nature.

'Giorno' collection, P.O.A, Molteni & C.

'Verre Eglomise' **tables**, from £1,645, House Couturier.

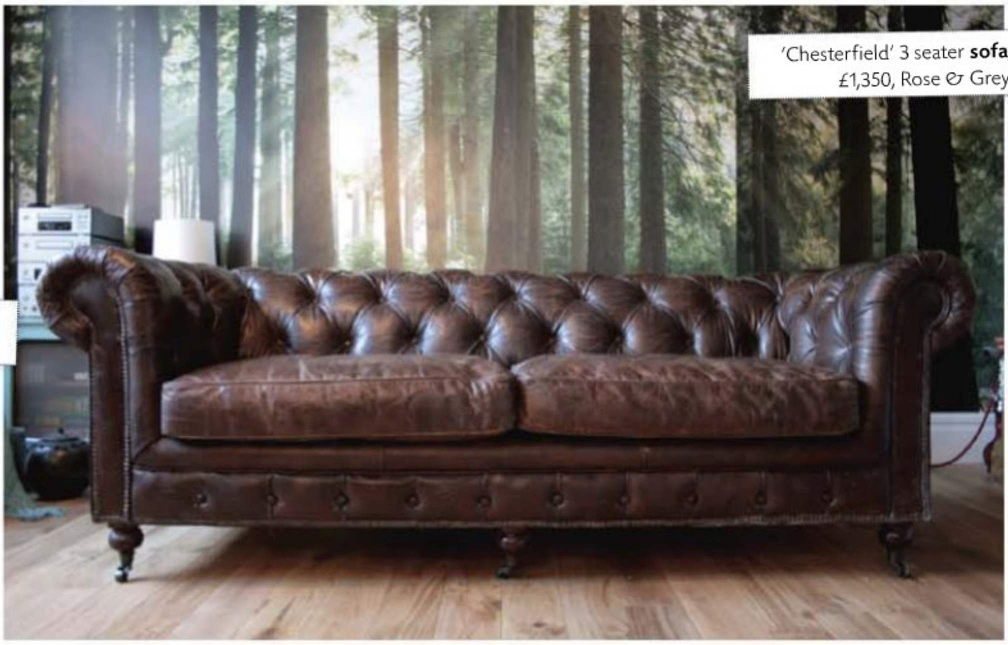
'Elton' **unit**, £275, cream coatstand, £99, John Lewis.

'Alizes' 3-4 seat **sofa**, from £2,660, 'Corolle' armchair, £1,390, Roche Bobois.

'Tallis' **sofa**, from £995, Barker and Stonehouse.

Rocking **chair**, £125, Dwell.

'Savoy' collection, from £3,380, Natuzzi.



'Chesterfield' 3 seater **sofa**, £1,350, Rose & Grey.

OUTDOOR ORGANICS

There's no better way to chill out and soak up the sun this summer than in one of our outdoor finds. Pick classic materials and a hint of cream or colour.

'Saccaro' **sofa**, from £1,495, Laminvale.

Classic wooden **table**, £89, Director **chairs**, £49, Graham and Green.

'Medici' **set**, from £999, BHS.

'Teardrop' **basket**, £359, Living It Up.

'Kama' modular **seating** by Ergo, from £1,576, Leisure Plan.

'Dune' **daybed**, £2,350, Teak.

All photographed on display in our showroom
OUR NEW DESIGNS FOR 2009
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COME FLY WITH ME

Twit twoo. Add one of these beautiful bird houses to your garden this summer – they'll keep your outdoor space on-trend and be the talk of any garden party. Stylist **Katie Cotgrave** Photographer **Eleri Griffiths**

For stockists see page 128.

Steel birdhouse, £12.50, Wild Floral Design.

'Townhouse' bird feeder, £39.95, The Worm That Turned.

Green wire bird feeder, £20, The Conran Shop.

Metal hanging birds, £3.99, Cloth-ears.

Shabby chic wooden bird house, £14.99, The Contemporary Home.

Bird house green, £10, Garden Trading.

Blue ceramic bird house, £15.99, Cloth-ears.

World hanging bird table, £29.91, Lakeland.

Coloured birdhouse, £6.99, Sainsbury's.

Birdhouse, £10, Grosvenor Garden Centre.

Handmade bird decorations, £14 each, Kitty & Dude.

'Blox' collection, chairs and bookcase, P.O.A., Bonaldo.

OCCASIONAL MAGIC

There's no easier and more satisfying way to update your living room than with a piece of occasional furniture. These buys are sure to cast a spell on you.

CHAIRS TO LOVE

From monochrome to bold shades no living space is complete without a striking occasional chair so add one of these to your lounge.

Chaise Longue, P.O.A, Cappellini Shadow.

'Torn' armchair, from £1, 776, and footstool, from £745, Ligne Roset.

Orla Kiely 'Lusk' armchair, £1,395, Heal's.

Divani Poltrone armchair, P.O.A., and footstool, P.O.A., Molteni & C.

'Sound' chair, £2,100, Natuzzi.

'Love Chair' in Crocus, £999, Barker and Stonehouse.

3 OF THE BEST BOOKCASES

In need of a home for your design-led books as stylish as titles you want to display? Then look no further...

'Fill' bookcase, P.O.A., Desalto.

'Urban' bookcase, P.O.A., Casamania.

'Fin' bay shelving, £599, Habitat.

Moroso 'Fjord' footstool, £664, Ferrious.

TABLES TO PLAY WITH

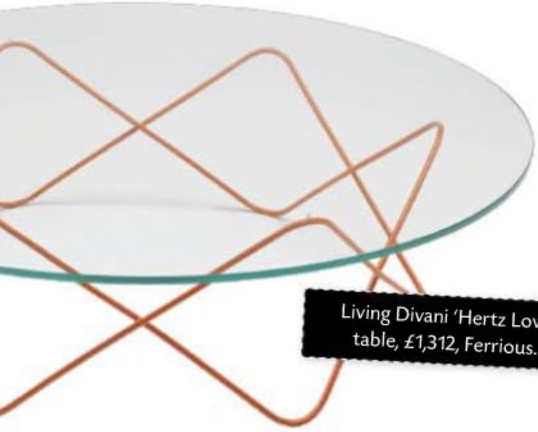
Be it a coffee, side or cocktail table, keep the rest of your chic furniture in good company with one of these choices: modern, classic, cool or kitsch they're all here.

'Maze' coffee table, £319, Multiyork.

'Reversi' cocktail table, £1,410, Roche Bobois.

Antonio Citterio extendable table, from £2,469, Vitra.

'Fin' coffee table, £399, Habitat.


Living Divani 'Hertz Low' table, £1,312, Ferrious.

'Avignon' console table, £470, Laura Ashley.

'Mimosa' side table, £124, Amaroni.

Coffee tables, P.O.A., Molteni & C.

'Pebble' coffee table, £1,015, Ligne Roset.

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urban design

SIDEBOARDS TO STYLE

The latest sideboards are designed to impress. Whether you want to store your clutter, display key art objects or just add a 'wow' factor, the solution's here.

Porro modern sideboard, £3,500, Ferrious.

Sideboard, P.O.A., Helena Jonasson.

'Hudson' large sideboard, £550, Next.

'Patch' cabinet, P.O.A., Casamania.

'Milton' sideboard, £840, Laura Ashley.

'Quadrica' sideboard, P.O.A., Bonaldo.

3 OF THE BEST **MAGAZINE RACKS**

What better place to keep and display all your copies of *Concept For Living* than in one of these original storage frames.

'Umbra Vogue' magazine rack, £120, Heal's.

'Veit' magazine rack, £50, Habitat.

Magazine frame, £165, Ligne Roset.

BEST

PICTURE **FRAMES**

Stylist **Katie Cotgrave** Photographer **Eleri Griffiths**

Need a chic frame for your summer holiday photos? This lot are picture perfect.

1 Red rose photo frame, £9.50, Not On The High Street. **2** Flowery picture frame, £8.99, Scandiliving. **3** Light wood oak frame, £7, BHS. **4** 'Lali' wooden frame, £15, Lombok. **5** Beaded picture frame, £11.99, Lisbeth Dahl. **6** 'Calvello' frame, £7, Paperchase. **7** Vintage photo frame, from £29, Heal's. **8** Glass frame, from £55.55, Max. **9** 'Rotafoto' frame, £25, Utility Design. **10** 'Freda' frame, £65, The Conran Shop.

For stockists see page 128

DISCOVERY **SPACE**

For July's Discovery Space we talk to rug designer Jürgen Dahlmanns, reveal the UK's finest Arts and Crafts house and bring you the freshest fruit bowls around. Compiled by Jennie Musgrove

For stockists see page 128.

WIN!
Concept For Living has five copies of *The Lake District* to give away. Visit: www.conceptforliving.co.uk for your chance to win!

BOOKMARK

The Lake District (A Lonely Planet Guide)

Author: Oliver Berry

With the prices of flights on the increase and high hopes for a warm summer, there has never been a better time to explore Britain, so Lonely Planet's first guide to the Lake District has arrived just in time.

"The loveliest spot that man hath ever found," is how poet William Wordsworth described the Lake District in the 1800s. Now in the 21st century, the national park has changed little and its beauty attracts tourists from all over the world.

The Lake District covers all the usual visitor information, including the best views, historical facts, detailed maps of the landscape and listings of places to eat and sleep. For those seeking something a bit different, the guide also shares the secrets of Cumbria such as the tizzie-wizzie, a creature said to have the body of a hedgehog, tail of a squirrel and the wings of a bee and the unidentified underwater creature sighted in Windermere, dubbed 'Bownessie'.

Published by Lonely Planet Publications
Available now
Price: £10.99
www.lonelyplanet.com

WORTH A VISIT

Blackwell, Bowness-on-Windermere

If you're planning a trip to the Lake District, Blackwell is a must-visit. Britain's finest surviving Arts and Crafts-style house stands in a beautiful setting overlooking Lake Windermere. Blackwell was designed between 1898 and 1900 by Baillie Scott, a wealthy Victorian industrialist from Manchester, and is now a treasure trove of arts, crafts and inspiring interior design.

Each room is a carefully designed space of controlled light, colour and decorative detail. These factors combine to create what Baillie Scott called 'the soul of the house' which 'soothes the spirit with promises of peace'. Blackwell is renowned for its programme of cutting-edge arts and crafts exhibitions and this year its original garden terraces will play host to sculpture by David Nash, linking with an exhibition of his work at Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal. **Admission: £6.30 for an adult, £3.70 for children and full-time students. Open daily 10.30am to 5pm April to October and to 4pm the rest of the year.**

WEBSPACE

www.thecoolhunter.co.uk

Concept For Living's latest addiction is The Cool Hunter, an online magazine dedicated to creativity and culture. Since its creation by Bill Tikos in 2004, it has become the most read design site in the world; a leading authority on all things creative and a truly global hub for what's cool, thoughtful, innovative and original.

The Cool Hunter has received the accolade of 'Best Culture Blog' in the Webblog Awards two years running (2007 and 2008) and currently has a readership of more than 780,000 people per month.

David Nash, Black Dome. Photography: Tony West

David Nash, installing his sculpture

ON OUR RADAR
Jürgen Dahlmanns

We chat to German designer Jürgen Dahlmanns, who founded RUG STAR in 2002 after leaving his career as an architect. Jürgen spends around two months of the year at his workshop in Nepal where RUG STAR's hand-knotted Tibetan rugs are produced and the rest of the year in his favourite city, Berlin.

HOW IS YOUR WORK INFLUENCED BY WHERE YOU LIVE?
I never have to look at a white sheet, because there are none in my world. To go to the grocery store is a study and a movie happening now, in each minute. I am living right in the centre of the city I love, Berlin.

WHEN ARE YOU HAPPIEST?
Life is at its best when it takes me into a situation I could have not imagined one minute before. If I have the chance to experience this with my dog, Miss Happy, and my relationship, I am Mr 'Super Happy'.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?
I do have 24 old Tibetan area rugs, each one has the same size (3m x 6m). Like every obsessed collector, on a Sunday I start rearranging the layout they are in on the floor of my apartment. Sometimes I wish they had different sizes; that would make it easier.

HOW ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR TIME AT THE MOMENT?
At the moment I am in Kathmandu and my fingers are still covered with colour. We spent the day in a disability place where we painted with the people. I think they had never before had anyone come over with big bottles of paint and just look for a beautiful day together.

WHAT ARE YOU INTO RIGHT NOW?
My hotel room is covered with fabrics which I bought in the Tibetan district of Kathmandu called Bhouda, in little wooden stores which might have been there forever, selling fabrics for dresses. I'm taking the supercharged colours of the floral silk patterns to translate them into the product I love the most, the Tibetan rug.

IF YOU WERE A SUPERHERO, WHAT WOULD YOUR SUPERPOWER BE?
My superpower would be the ability to transform pollution into a balanced environment. For this I would also wear a very stupid superhero dress. You can put me into a carrot or a cauliflower; I swear I would wear the dress.

IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME, WHERE WOULD YOU GO?
There is no time in the past which was better than now. I am very happy where I am at the moment.

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?
Old people who are proud!

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON LIFE HAS TAUGHT YOU?
To question, to continue and to create.

AUTUMN OR SPRING?
Both seasons are the ones I like most.

CITY OR COUNTRYSIDE?
Hard to answer. When I am in a city I love the city, when I am in the countryside I love the countryside. I love where I am and what I do; I guess I am very blessed and very happy.

WWW.RUG-STAR.COM

ABOVE 'Noodlesoup' €1,200 per sq m, 90% Tibetan highland wool, 10% silk, RUGSTAR.

THE MAGIC THREE
Fruit Bowls

Keep healthy *and* stylish with one of our funky fruit bowls!

FROM TOP
Legnoart Grembo fruit bowl, from £55, My Living Space
www.mylivingspace.co.uk
ROW ergonomic wooden fruit tray (solid walnut and oak), £39, Funktion Alley
www.funktionalley.com
Mingle Duo bowl, £38, Scandi Living
www.scandiliving.com

MAKE SPACE FOR...
Butterfly Kiss Armchair

French designer Christian Ghion's beautifully elegant Butterfly Kiss armchair is top of *Concept For Living*'s wish list this July. This chic armchair is the result of a collaboration between Christian and Italian furniture maker Sawaya & Moroni. Inspired by the insect world, it has a chromed steel base and is available in fabric or leather. The perfect perch for anyone's living space!
Butterfly Kiss armchair, €3,460, designed by Christian Ghion for Sawaya & Moroni
www.sawayamoroni.com

WIN A BISQUE RADIATOR

WORTH OVER £500!

This month *Concept For Living* has teamed up with top home project management designers Langley Interiors to offer you a chance to win a Bisque 'Archibald' towel radiator in chrome worth £549!

Langley Interiors in Bolton create beautiful bedrooms, bathrooms and studies that are stylish yet comfortable. "Our cutting edge design shakes up the concept of conformity when it comes to room planning, design, décor and accessorising," says designer Peter Langley of Langley Interiors.

The designers provide a full project management service but also pride themselves on offering that bit more. "At Langley Interiors everything is done for you by our team of experts, from planning and design to fitting and fixtures," says Peter. "Our project management service includes all of the services you would expect to find; design, build and installation, but we also take care of those frustrating bits, like finding an electrician or organising building alterations."

Langley Interiors' philosophy is not to do things as tradition dictates and to create unique living environments. "We love to create personality-driven spaces, often with a dash of quirkiness and lots of imagination," adds Peter. "Every home is different, every room is different and every person is different so our passion is to create wonderful rooms by injecting individuality into our designs and using exclusive accessories."

One touch to add innovation and style to a room is with a Bisque radiator which, while being practical and functional, looks like a work of art and is the perfect show piece for a bathroom, bedroom, study, hall or even garage.

Bisque is the UK's leading radiator designer and offers over 25 styles in a variety of size, finishes and colour-ways – a large selection of which can be seen at the Langley Interiors showroom.

The 'Archibald' towel rail (pictured left) in chrome was designed by Leo Salzedo for Bisque and is perfect for modern homes. It's 1240mm (h) by 525mm (l) with an output of 307 watts and is ideal for keeping your towels dry and aired in the most stylish way possible. The RRP for the radiator is £549 + VAT but for your chance to win one just keep reading...

The Langley Interiors showroom in Bolton is open Monday-Saturday 9.30am-4.30pm, Sunday 11am-4pm. Or visit: www.langleyinteriors.co.uk for more information.

To be in with a chance of winning the Bisque radiator all you need to do is answer the following question:

Who designed the 'Archibald' towel radiator for Bisque?

A Leo Salzedo
B Leo Archibald
C Leo Bisque

If you think you know, email your answer to: competitions@conceptforliving.co.uk Type 'Bisque Competition' in the subject box and state your name, address, email address and daytime contact number. Or, post your entry to: Bisque Competition, *Concept For Living*, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester, CH4 9AJ. The closing date for all entries is midnight Tuesday 14 July 2009.

(Please state if you do not wish for your contact information to be used in the future by Langley Interiors to keep you informed about future products, launches and news.)

LANGLEY INTERIORS

Terms & Conditions
Full terms and conditions apply. Delivery date is at the discretion of Langley Interiors. Winner must be available to take delivery of the prize during working hours in a given week. The prize does not include fitting.

All photographed on display in our showroom

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COFFEE TABLE

Words **Hester Brodie**

Whether it's ideas for your bedroom you're after or plans for your kitchen, get yourself a coffee, take a bit of time out and be inspired by these beautiful books to keep you and your guests entertained all summer long.

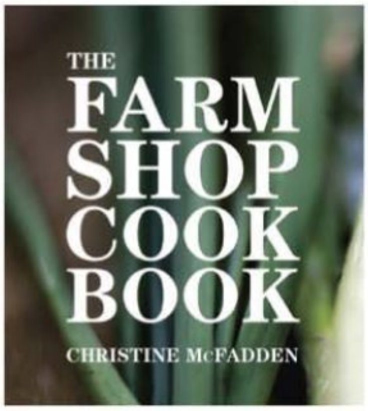
Living With White

BY GAIL ABBOTT
Published by CICO Books
Available now
Price: £19.99, hardback
www.cicobooks.com

Showcasing an eclectic mix of houses in Europe, Africa and America all of which have one thing in common – their varied and striking use of white – this book reveals white not as a boring neutral but as a versatile colour backdrop. With fantastic photography, this is a hardback in which to indulge but even a quick flick through instantly gives you some great style tips for your home.

The book is divided into four chapters: island, contemporary, seaside and textural whites and shows how using white in the home simplifies everything, making stylish living easy. A white base lets brightly coloured pieces that otherwise wouldn't necessarily fit together be added with ease. The freshest colour of the spectrum also allows light to bounce off the walls and creates a tranquil place to relax.

Living With White: Decorating With Shades Of White, Texture, And Accents Of Colour shows white as a fresh, simple colour with which you can create clean lines and add interest with your own personal items. This book is a staple for anyone with a flair for style and a love of simplicity.



The Farm Shop Cook Book

BY CHRISTINE McFADDEN
Published by Absolute Press
Available now
Price £20, hardback
www.absolutepress.co.uk

Containing an A-Z of farm shop produce, seasonal guides and shopping and storage suggestions as well as over 200 recipes, this mouth-watering hardback is more than just a recipe book. Designed to celebrate fresh British food the cook book covers everything you need to know about how to shop for fresh produce in the ever-increasing number of farm shops appearing across the country. It contains a small section showing you when is the best time to buy certain fruits and vegetables, clearly listing their availability each season, as well as covering seasonal availability for game meats.

The Farm Shop Cook Book embraces British cooking and its format, broken down into an A-Z with small sections based around one key food (apples, beetroot, cream), makes this book very easy to use. Award-winning food writer Christine McFadden's recipe instructions are also simple. A brief warning though: it's best to prepare your taste buds in advance for the melt-in-your-mouth photography.

Photo Edmind Sumner

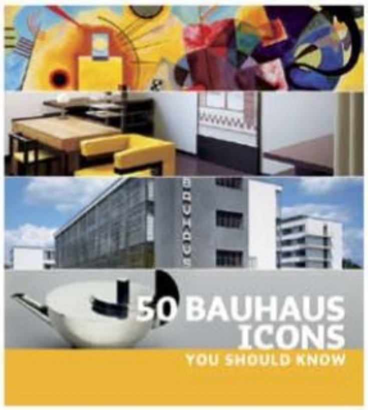
Super-Cute Crochet

BY NICKI TRENCH
Published by CICO Books
Available now
Price £12.99, paperback
www.bettysbureau.co.uk

Add a fun, quirky element to your coffee table with this book, which is not only guaranteed to be picked up by guests but is also perfect for anyone who enjoys learning how to make new things and great for kids.

Showing you how to make 35 cute crochet creatures including Cluck Berry the Chick and Eleanor the Elephant, *Super-cute Crochet* contains very clear instructions and makes learning these new techniques simple and easy.

As well as a great decoration the book doubles up as a perfect way to keep kids entertained if a few rainy summer days crop up and it's also great for adults looking for a new relaxing hobby – you've heard of stitch 'n' bitch, so why not try crochet and chat? Above all though the fun ideas and step-by-step instructions make this book a complete must-have for crochet lovers. In no time at all you'll be hooked.



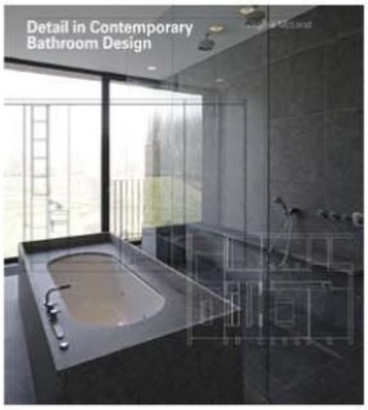
50 Bauhaus Icons You Should Know

BY JOSEF STRASSER
Published by Prestel
Available now
Price £13.99, paperback
www.prestel.com

This year the Bauhaus School is celebrating its 90th anniversary and to honour this fact Prestel have released *50 Bauhaus Icons You Should Know* Written by art historian and curator at the Neue Sammlung Munich, Josef Strasser, this deluxe design manual is a brilliant guide for anyone who wants to learn more about one of the most influential movements in modern architecture, art and design.

The book discusses everyone from Marcel Breuer, designer of the iconic Wassily Chair, to Walter Gropius, one of the key players in Bauhaus architecture. Setting new standards and creating new approaches to art, Bauhaus designs became much-coveted items and the minimalist aspect gave these fantastic designs vast appeal to art lovers everywhere.

Presenting 50 design masterpieces in chronological order, *Icons* is a great starting point for anyone interested in art and design. Plus, no respectable design-conscious coffee table or bookcase can survive without at least one Bauhaus title; so if you don't already have one, make this publication yours.



Detail In Contemporary Bathroom Design

BY VIRGINIA McLEOD
Published by Laurence King
Available now
Price £25, hardback
www.laurenceking.com

Aimed at professionals but fascinating for anyone with an interest in home architecture, this book takes an in-depth look at over 30 stunning and varied bathroom designs from around the world and reveals the architectural details that go into the design of a modern bathroom.

This just-released title places bathrooms in the context of the home showing floor plans and detailed information, giving dimensions and scales for each project featured.

Detail In Contemporary Bathroom Design showcases bathrooms from all around the globe ranging from properties in Belgium to Japan, and Los Angeles to London. It also looks at how bathrooms have developed over the years from outhouses to sublime relaxation sanctuaries! Today a bathroom is a central focus of the home, and perhaps the only place one can truly relax, hence why the nature of design in bathrooms has become one of the most important parts in creating a homely environment.

Storage: Get Organized

BY TERENCE CONRAN
Published by Conran Octopus
Available now
Price £16.99, paperback
www.octopusbooks.co.uk/conran

Within the colourful and beautifully photographed pages of this book Terence Conran, one of the British kings of design, shares his supreme knowledge of all things storage in the home. While the first part of *Storage* advises on how to assess your needs and case studies, Conran then addresses parts of the home area by area (living space, kitchen and eating area, bathroom, bedroom, children's room) giving tips on how to store everything from clothes to cookware.

Storage: Get Organized is ideal reading for anyone who wants to create space and storage in a smaller home and also shows innovative ways to display your favourite pieces while catering for all tastes and styles. As well as handy pointers on how to disguise storage Conran also provides tips on how to prevent clutter accumulating (always very useful).

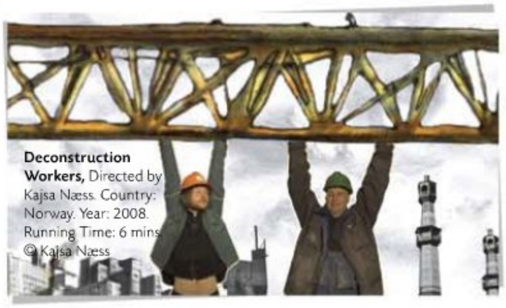
If you're interested in keeping things organised and a fan of Conran's simple design technique – and let's face it who isn't? – *Storage* is for you.

WHAT'S **ON**

From video gaming to Surrealism, Northern art venues have put on a fabulous array of inspiring must-see exhibitions this summer. Here are some of *Concept For Living*'s favourites...

John and Karen, Directed by Matthew Walker. Country: England. Year: 2007. Running Time: 3 min, 30 secs. © Arthur Cox

La Maison en Petits Cubes, Directed by Kunio Kato. Country: Japan. Year: 2008. Running Time: 12 min. © Kunio Kato



Deconstruction Workers, Directed by Kajsa Næss. Country: Norway. Year: 2008. Running Time: 6 mins © Kajsa Næss

David Nash, Drawings and Sculpture. Image: Courtesy David Nash. Photo: Julia Schwager, Königstein, Germany

Cholmondeley Pageant of Power

Cholmondeley Pageant of Power

DAVID NASH
DRAWINGS AND SCULPTURES

Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal
Tel. 01539 722 464
www.abbothall.org.uk
Admission: Adults £5.75, free for under 18s and full-time students up to 25
Open Monday to Saturday 10.30am to 5pm
From 6 July to 10 Oct 2009

The work of internationally renowned artist David Nash will be on show at two of Cumbria's most beautiful venues from 6 July: Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House. Nash is a pioneer of sculpture, working with wood to form large, dramatic and tactile sculptures. His work evolves out of a direct relationship with nature and living forms, and the elements of fire and water are used in his sculptures.

Abbot Hall will exhibit sculptures and drawings covering Nash's entire working period to date, with many previously unseen works. At Blackwell, two sculptures will be installed outside on the lawns of the house, while inside subtle interventions will take place featuring Nash's sculptures.

THE CHOLMONDELEY PAGEANT OF POWER

Cholmondeley Castle and Gardens, Cheshire
Tel. 01829 772 432
www.cpop.co.uk
Admission: Tickets start at £15
See the website for further details
From Saturday 18 to Sunday 19 July 2009
Gates open 8am to 6.30pm both days

The Cholmondeley Pageant of Power is a celebration of cars, bikes, boats and helicopters and takes place every year in the beautiful grounds of Cholmondeley Castle in Cheshire. The show for 2009 features more than 150 of the best historic racing cars and bikes which will be driven at high speeds on a specially constructed track. The show will also play host to the largest collection of inshore powerboats in the UK, with world champions competing in Thundercats, Hydroplanes and both Formula 2 and 4 boats. On top of all this, more than 175 private helicopters are expected to fly in for the show.

Family activities include JCB Dancing Diggers, 4x4 driving experience, a period funfair, go-karts and Scalextric racing.

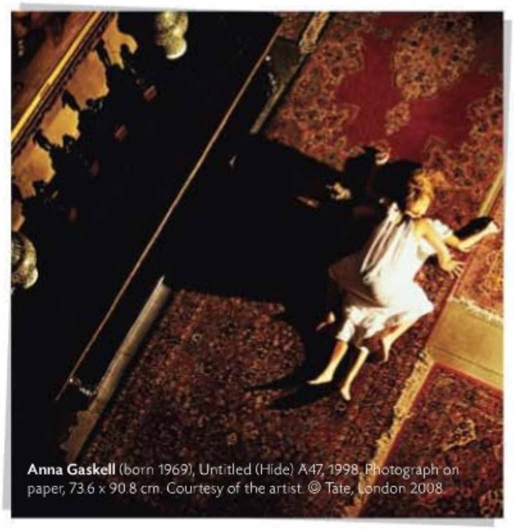
SMALL WORLD
INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL

The Gallery @ Barnsley Civic, Barnsley
Tel. 01226 327 000
www.barnsleycivic.co.uk
Admission: Free
Open daily 10am to 5.45pm
Sundays 10am to 4.45pm
From 22 July to 2 September 2009

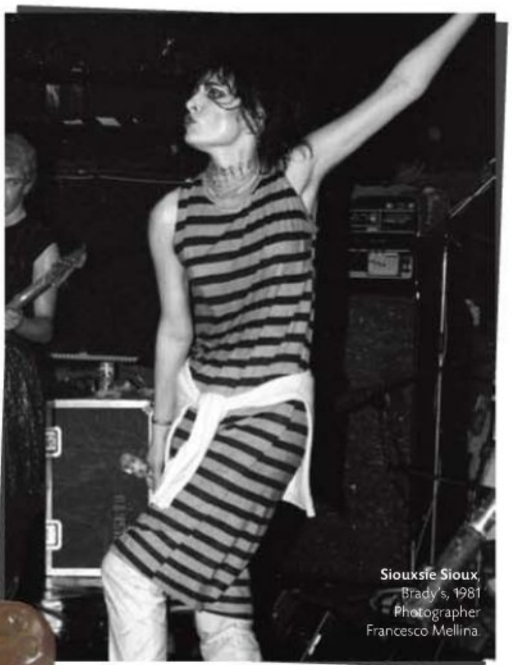
Small World is a new film festival which will include some of the world's best current short animation films in emerging cultural centre, The Civic, Barnsley. Visitors can watch more than 30 animated films by animators and artists from around the world – many of whom are Oscar winners and nominees.

The festival will also feature the UK premiere of two films: Australian animation *The Cat Piano*, narrated by Nick Cave as well as Norwegian film, *Deconstruction Worker*, which was recently shown at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York.

Other films on show at The Civic's three screens cover a diverse selection of ideas and stories; from 2009 Oscar winner *La Maison en Petits Cubes*, a mesmerising reflection on the different stages of life to Pixar short *Presto*, an engaging tale of a magician's assistant who won't play ball.


Anna Gaskell (born 1969), Untitled (Hide) A47, 1998. Photograph on paper, 73.6 x 90.8 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Tate, London 2008.

Henry Moore, Head and Shoulders, 1922. Reproduced by permission of the Henry Moore Foundation.


Siouxsie Sioux, Brady's, 1981. Photographer Francesco Mellina.

Robert Gober (born 1954), Untitled, 1989 – 92. Sculpture; wood, wax, leather, cotton and human hair. 30 x 16 x 51.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Tate, London 2008.

Henry Moore, Reclining Figure, 1930. Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, UEA. Photographer James Austin.

U2, Brady's, 1981.

SURREALISM AND CONTEMPORARY ART

SUBVERSIVE SPACES

Compton Verney, Warwickshire
Tel. 01926 645 500
www.comptonverney.org.uk
Admission: £8, concessions £6
Open Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am to 5pm
Until 6 Sep 2009

Surrealist imagery has become commonplace in everyday life – from popular culture to the world of business, advertising and all forms of design. *Surrealism and Contemporary Art* presents work by the masters of Surrealism alongside the work of contemporary artists. In doing so, it reveals the impact of one of the most influential art movements of the 20th century on a generation of younger artists.

The exhibition focuses on a fascination with the symbolism of interior and public spaces, and explores the social and psychological space of architecture and the environment. Artists represented include René Magritte, Mona Hatoum, Dorothea Tanning, Max Ernst, the photographer Brassaï and Salvador Dalí.

MOORE, HEPWORTH, NICHOLSON

A NEST OF GENTLE ARTISTS IN THE 1930S

Graves Gallery, Sheffield
Tel. 0114 278 2600
www.museums-sheffield.org.uk
Admission: Free
Open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm
Closed Sundays
Until 29 Aug 2009

Three of the biggest names in 20th century art are represented at Graves Gallery this summer in *Moore, Hepworth, Nicholson: A Nest of Gentle Artists in the 1930s*. With major works from all three artists and others, the exhibition looks at how their surrounding environment and personal relationships played a part in the development of their now iconic abstract style.

During a series of holidays in Norfolk in the early 1930s, Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and Ben Nicholson's lives and work became intertwined. The three found inspiration in the surrounding coastline, its weathered stones and pebbles, as well as each other's company, through friendly competition and the sharing of ideas.

The personal and professional lives of the artists form a backdrop to the fascinating story of abstract sculpture in Britain which is explored in this exhibition.

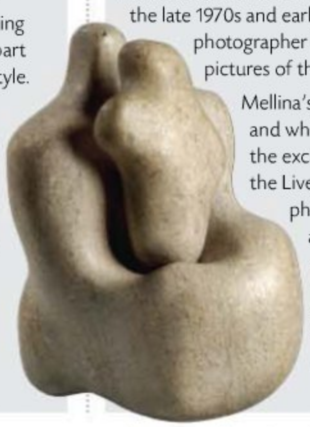
SOUND AND VISION

MUSIC AND FASHION PHOTOGRAPHED BY FRANCESCO MELLINA, LIVERPOOL, 1978-82

National Conservation Centre, Liverpool
Tel. 0151 478 4999
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/conservation
Admission: Free
Open daily 10am to 5pm
Until 31 Aug

After lying untouched for a quarter of a century, a collection of photographs which provide a unique snapshot of Liverpool's music scene and nightlife at one of its most creative times are on display at the National Conservation Centre. The images from the late 1970s and early '80s were taken by local photographer Francesco Mellina and include pictures of the legendary nightclub Eric's.

Mellina's previously unseen black and white photography captures the excitement and diversity of the Liverpool music scene, with photographs of stadium-filling artists U2, Mick Hucknall and New Order alongside pictures of local Liverpool acts Echo and the Bunnymen, The Teardrop Explodes, Pete Wylie and Pete Burns.


Barbara Hepworth, Mother and Child, 1934. Wakefield Art Gallery.

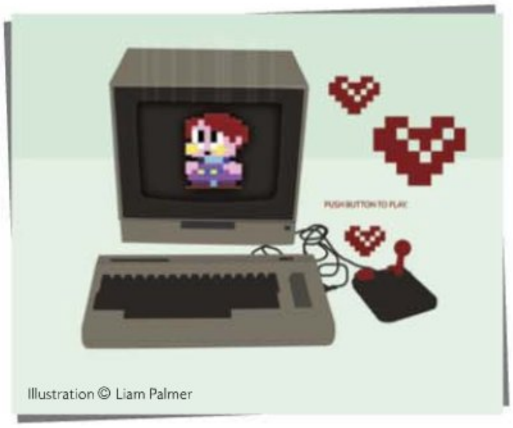
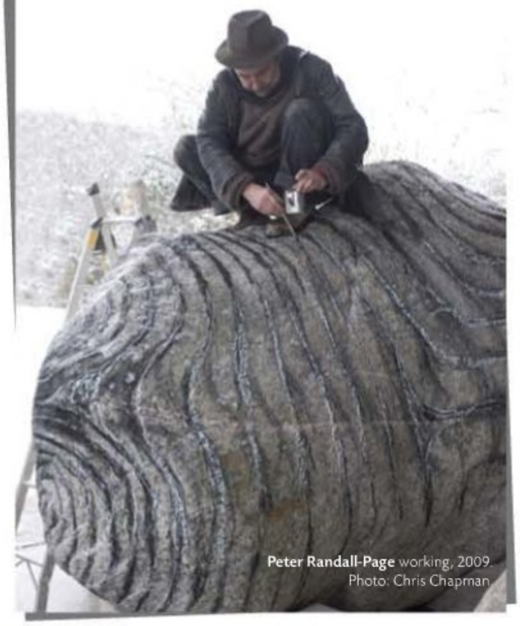
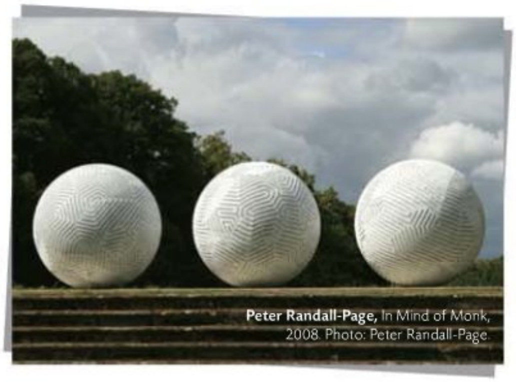


Illustration © Liam Palmer

Badass


Peter Randall-Page working, 2009. Photo: Chris Chapman

Sol Le Witt, Wall Drawing A1136, 2004. © The estate of Sol LeWitt. Photography by John Wilson White


Peter Randall-Page, In Mind of Monk, 2008. Photo: Peter Randall-Page

ARTIST ROOMS: **SOL LEWITT**

Tate Liverpool, Liverpool
Tel. 0151 702 7400
www.tate.org.uk/liverpool
Admission: Free
Open Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 10am to 5.50pm
Until 13 Sep 2009

Sol LeWitt's monumental and colourful *Wall Drawing #1136* (2004) is on display at Tate Liverpool this summer as part of The Art Fund's nationwide scheme, *Artist Rooms*. The work was first installed at Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco in 2004 and is a late example of LeWitt's work, where vibrantly coloured bands are painted directly onto the wall of the gallery space. At Tate Liverpool it will span the 22m-long wall of the ground floor gallery.

Artist Rooms will see 18 museums and galleries across the UK displaying works from the collection created by dealer and collector, Anthony d'Offay, which was purchased on behalf of the nation in February 2008. From St Ives to the Orkney Islands, works by seminal artists rarely seen in the UK outside London will be displayed for all to enjoy.

VIDEOGAME NATION

Urbis, Manchester
Tel. 0161 605 8200
www.urbis.org.uk
Admission: Free
Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm
Closed Mondays
Until 20 Sep 2009

An interactive show at Manchester's contemporary exhibition centre, Urbis, charts the meteoric rise in video gaming. *Videogame Nation* celebrates the best of British video gaming from its birth in the 1970s to the present day. Visitors have the chance to discover forgotten gems within simulated gaming environments including a seaside-style arcade and a football stadium.

From 'Manic Miner' (1983) to 'Grand Theft Auto IV' (2008), the exhibition takes players on a thrilling ride through the UK's gaming generations and traces the journey of computer programming, from the hidden realm of the bedroom to what has become a multi-billion pound industry.

As part of the interactive exhibition, visitors can play early games such as 'Jetpac' (1983) on the BBC Micro or 'Jet Set Willy' (1984) on the Sinclair ZX Spectrum in an authentic bedroom setting.

PETER RANDALL PAGE

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, near Wakefield
Tel. 01924 832 631
www.ysp.co.uk
Admission: Free. Parking is £4 for the day
Open 10am to 4pm daily
From 27 June to early 2010

An exhibition at Yorkshire Sculpture Park of work by stone carver and draftsman Peter Randall-Page will be the artist's most extensive to date, featuring a range of ambitious new pieces. Three monumental sculptures in Kilkenny limestone have been made especially for the Park's vast space of the Underground Gallery and in the open air, sculptures in a variety of stones including marble, granite and limestone will resonate with the landscape.

Contextualising the new work will be a display of maquettes, models, prints and drawings spanning a 20-year period, reflecting on the artist's stylistic, technical and thematic developments.

Little Big Planet's Afro Boy

ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

KITCHEN IDEAS

This month we've focused on top kitchen buys, everything from fridge freezers to wine racks – this lot are chic *and* boast eco-credentials.

WINE RACK

The new wall-mounted wine rack from Black + Blum is eco-friendly, finished in brushed stainless steel and it holds eight bottles – we love it! Price: £30. Keep your bottles looking sleek and stylish while they're full, drink up then recycle them afterwards. Who said being eco friendly had to be hard work?

Tel. 020 7633 0202 or visit: www.black-blum.com for more information.

CHEST FREEZER

Liebherr have launched their new chest freezer, using only 113kWh of electricity over a year means it's the world's most energy efficient chest freezer, making the freezer better for your home and the environment. Liebherr also do a fridge-freezer that is finished with Smart Steel – a new technologically advanced steel that doesn't show greasy marks. The chest freezer is priced at £549.

Tel. 08444 122 655 or visit: www.liebherr.co.uk for more of their products.

TUMBLERS

These fantastic new tumblers and glasses from ECOutlet are made from recycled glass bottles collected from bars and restaurants. Unlike most glass recycling, cutting and polishing the bottles into tumblers means the glass doesn't need to be melted down, making this glassware brilliantly energy efficient. Price: £3.45.

Tel. 0207 272 7233 or visit: www.ecoutlet.co.uk for nearest stockist info.

WASHING-UP BRUSH

The Green Shop's latest eco-friendly wooden washing up brush with fibre bristles comes with four spare heads meaning you get maximum use out of the one brush. And priced at £6.45 it's kind on your bank account as well as the environment.

Tel. 01452 770 629 or visit: www.greenshop.co.uk to get yours.

RECYCLING BIN

Green Stamp has designed this fantastic aluminium recycling bin. Not only does it look good but also it comes with a bright lid available in a variety of colour ways, opt for the green top and it's a handy way to help children recognise the bin is for recycled products – a perfect addition to a family kitchen. Price: £225.

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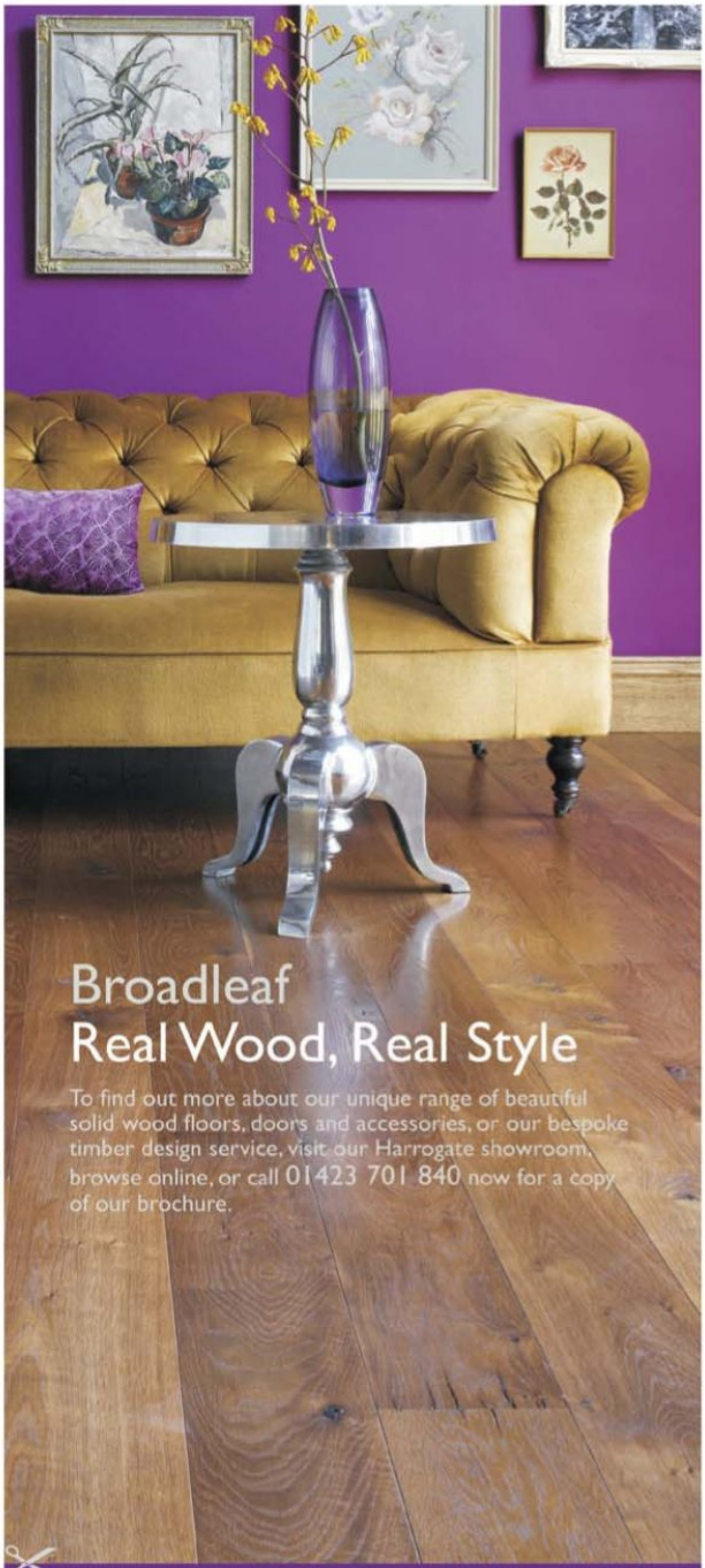

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Simon Milner-Moore
Blind Colour
Tel. 07813 899 974
www.blind-colour.com

MY **FAVOURITE** THINGS

Simon Milner-Moore is an interior designer and founder of quality design service Blind Colour.

Simon's career was born out of an unlikely childhood passion for rearranging furniture. "I've always been a designer," he says. "As a child I would rearrange furniture, from a very early age I understood how we interact with our environments. "My parents have dreadful taste in interior design but even so my first break came from my father. He worked at Claridge's hotel, London and it was an enormous treat to tiptoe around various nooks and crannies of this wonderful Art Deco sanctuary."

Claridge's Mayfair hotel, London

Most influential product designer

I'm a big fan of the school of Bauhaus. I wonder what would have happened had it not been crushed by Hitler's hatred of the style. However, one thing that was praised by the dictator was the Porsche brand. The company has, in my opinion, the Midas touch, not only for engineering but for design. I have no inclination to build cars but I can appreciate beautifully executed design and this brand seems to have remained undiluted for over 50 years.

The beautifully executed design of Porsche

Future classic

Commission your own!

Ribbon table, Michael Warren

Design-related quote or philosophy

"A good interior designer will save you more time and money than they cost you."

Bormann lamp for Bauhaus

Design Classic

My wife was recently contacted by an old colleague of mine, Michael Warren, via the dreaded Facebook; Michael had always been a natural product designer and when I checked out his website (www.michaelwarren.com) I was bowled over by his ribbon table. Within minutes I was on the phone to him and working out the costs and sizes for a bespoke carbon fibre version of the table. After we take the delivery next month the table will give me far more pleasure than anything that could be picked up off the peg and will, in my eyes, be a future classic.

DESIGNER MAKER PROFILE

Last year's Design Factory winner **Jo Miller** took time out to discuss her favourite design heroes, current projects and her most treasured possession.

Born in Leicester Jo moved to mid-Wales at a young age where she spent her childhood surrounded by beautiful landscapes and fresh air. Art and design was always a favourite subject, one that Jo excelled in. Jo always knew that her dream career was in design and she had to work hard to pursue it. The Design Factory Awards are an annual recognition of talented designer crafters and makers in the East Midlands. After graduating in 2008 with a BA in Furniture Design, Jo's gone from strength to strength and last year took the top spot at the Design Factory with her 'Cruciform Credenza' design. Jo was chosen as the winner due to the strong aesthetic and visual balance of her design and her good choice of materials and level of detail. Her design was based on a hollow and solid cruciform structure, using contrasting materials and complementary elements. The young designer has used the competition grant of £1,500 to develop a website that is launching this year to coincide with her debut at 100% Design London.

Q&A

What is your most treasured possession?
Edd the duck! A teddy I have had since I was born, it doesn't look too good these days and no longer represents a duck but I still love it!

How do you relax?
Listening to music and socialising with friends.

Where is your favourite destination?
Andorra on the ski slopes when the sun is out.

What is your guilty pleasure?
Eating Nutella straight from the jar.

Do you have a motto?
Play hard and work hard.

Describe yourself in five words
Optimistic, assertive, creative, friendly and determined.

What inspires you?
Inspiration comes from a broad variety of things: architecture, the natural world, manufacturing processes and materials.

Who are your design heroes?
My design heroes include Hella Jongerius, I admire her diverse use of media and experimental techniques, and for producing products ranging from low to high end. I like the work of other designers from Droog for their innovative approach, their designs are not purely focused on aesthetics and function instead they introduce nostalgia and humour.

What are your current projects?
At the moment I'm producing a design that utilises CNC technology, it's made from birch plywood. I am also planning on exhibiting at 100% Design.

Can you describe your work?
My work reflects my interest in component connection and assembly, modularity and duplicate placement are often considered. I seek an outcome, which is visual and structurally balanced through using complementary and contrasting principles.

What is your favourite piece of work so far?
The stool I am currently manufacturing as it was complex to resolve, due to its stacking and modular capabilities.

Contact Details:
Jo Miller
TEL. 07725 880 724
VISIT: www.jomillerfurniture.com

Art for All

The Watergate Street Gallery opened in 1992 with a philosophy to bring new, fresh, different, yet affordable art for all.

With over 1000 framed pictures on display, to suit all tastes and pockets, you are sure to find the perfect picture for your home or office.

We also have a treasure trove of collectable artists including Peter Blake, Jack Vettriano, Beryl Cook, Robert Heindel, Willi Kissmer, Donald Hamilton Fraser, Roy Fairchild Woodard, Todd White, Bernard Vogel and Terry Frost.

The Watergate Street Gallery

60 Watergate Street, Chester, CH1 2LA **t:** 01244 345 698 www.watergatestreetgallery.co.uk

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www.purpletree.co.uk

James Naughton, Valley Edge

A DIFFERENT VIEW

A recent exhibition at Lancashire's most exciting contemporary art gallery, Ascot Studios, showcased the work of Bolton-based artist James Naughton. *Concept For Living* spoke to him to find out more about his abstract way of working and his fascination with light.

Words **Jennie Musgrove**

"I just had an inherent knowledge about the way light can suggest certain emotions"

James Naughton, Under Cloud Views

There's something universally emotive about the way a break in the clouds can let a few intense rays of sunlight illuminate part of the landscape. A dull and dreary scene turns swiftly into a breathtaking vision of light and colour; an ordinary vista transformed into an extraordinary composition. It's the ability to capture and reflect these awe-inspiring moments that has secured artist James Naughton's popularity throughout the UK. The landscapes he creates reveal a deep understanding and love of nature, and never fail to enchant the viewer.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the way James paints is that he doesn't work from photography, or even from memory. Instead, he experiments with the oil paint until a composition reveals itself within the markings. "I've always been more interested in my own sub-conscious reaction to what's happening as I'm painting," he said. "So I tend to approach each piece of work with a playful nature, where I'm almost like a little child playing with plastecine or something. What I'm trying to do is be very playful and almost abstract, and at a certain point it'll just fall into place."

Despite the apparent realness of his paintings, James never deliberately sets out to paint a pre-envisaged landscape. "It's all about my experience of what the paint can do and my experience of nature coming together at that point and just having those moments of recognition that dictate where the painting's going to go."

In stark contrast to James's abstract technique, his paintings have an almost photographic likeness to reality. This, he believes, is the most inexplicable aspect of his work. "It's very mysterious how real they end up looking. Some of them really do look photographic. That's not my intention; it's not something that I ever set out to do. Which just makes it even more strange."

One reason for the realness of James's paintings is his enchanting use of light. Since studying Graphic Arts at Leeds University, James has been fascinated with light and its emotive potential. "When I was at college I did quite a lot of print making, and they were predominantly black and white," he said. "There was just something about the simplicity of tone that I really enjoyed. Once I started doing landscapes and bringing elements of colour into them, I just had an inherent knowledge about the way light can suggest certain emotions."

This romantic element of James's work stems from growing up in Bolton, where he is still based. "It's interesting, Bolton, because it's pretty much an industrial northern town but it's surrounded by the moors and has pockets of real beauty. I always think about it as being in some way the roots of my work. I'm in this urban setting most of the time and so my ideas about what nature can be and what nature can do are in some way a reaction to my environment. So I've got more romantic notions about it and fanciful ideas, which someone who lived with nature all the time perhaps wouldn't have."

James's work is reminiscent of that of JMW Turner, and there are similarities in both artists' representations of nature. "Turner is one of my big heroes as a painter," he said. "He lived in London for most of his life, surrounded by a massive city, and yet you can tell that

James Naughton, Warm Rainfall

"Although the subject of my work is quite traditional, I think it has got this little twist that makes it ever so slightly removed from reality"

what he sensed from nature was how uncontrollable it is and how much emotive power it has."

Turner aside, James's artistic influences span far and wide, from figurative painter Francis Bacon to Japanese writer Haruki Murakami. Looking back on his childhood love of science fiction and *Star Wars*, he's almost surprised to find himself a painter of such a traditional subject matter. "I was always interested in cartoons and animations as a youngster, and science fiction and fantasy illustration. What's fascinating for me is that I've come from those interests, and although the subject of my work is quite traditional, I think it has got this little twist that makes it ever so slightly removed from reality. It's almost got more power because it's more subdued and subtle, but it's connected to something that we see all the time."

It's this familiarity that makes James's work so accessible, as he explained. "I was on a journey with a friend last week, going through the countryside, and there were points when he'd say, 'Oh look, that's a James Naughton.' There are quite a lot of people who'll say that to me. I think it's really nice but, as I said to my friend, my work doesn't actually look like what you see from the road. It's a different view, there's a slight twist on it."

So what's next for James? A notion to write and illustrate a children's storybook has been on his mind for a while, but for now he's happy to concentrate on defying the difficult times ahead. "Telling stories is something that I'll set aside some time to do at some point," he said. "I'd pencilled in a couple of months this year to make a start with it. But with the financial climate it just doesn't feel like the right time. It's almost as though I want to rise to the challenge and really concentrate on doing the absolute best work that I can at this time." And with such a talent for capturing the imagination of the British public, we're sure James's much-deserved success will continue for years to come. ■

LEFT James in his studio, surrounded by inspiring pictures and oil paints. Photograph by Eleri Griffiths. **RIGHT** James talking to co-exhibitor, Margaret Francis, at Ascot Studios. Photograph by Charlotte Boothman.

James Naughton's work is currently available to view and buy at Ascot Studios, Ribchester. To find out more about him visit: www.jamesnaughton.com or www.ascotstudios.com.

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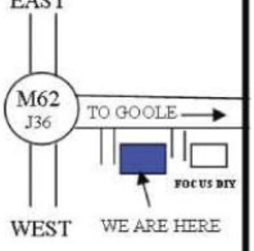

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A NAME FOR DESIGN

Sophie Conran recently launched her new 'White Oak' range of crockery for Portmeirion Potteries at the prestigious Mulberry Hall, York.

The daughter of British design icon Terence Conran and influential cookery writer Caroline Conran, Sophie grew up surrounded by creativity. Her latest designs were inspired by the time she spent in her father's Habitat workshop as a child and their elegant simplicity reflects her own love for stylish yet functional table- and cookware. **We talked to Sophie about her memories, inspirations and career as a celebrated chef and an award-winning designer.**

DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A DESIGNER OR A CHEF?

I don't think I'd have the enthusiasm for one if I didn't do the other. My designs are based around the home, around what is enjoyable in the home; so having a decent glass is just as important as what you put in it. It's about the whole experience and trying to make life that much nicer.

HOW DOES BEING A CHEF INFLUENCE THE PRODUCTS YOU DESIGN?

When I use things in a kitchen, I think of them as tools. My kitchen's a bit like a shed; it's where I tinker around and make things. So the pieces I use in the kitchen have to be practical, but I don't want them to take over; they're not designed to look flashy. They're to be used and enjoyed because they work and because they're an extension to your hands.

WHERE DID YOU FIND INSPIRATION FOR THE 'WHITE OAK' RANGE?

The inspiration for the texture of it came from a chap called Michael Wickham who used to work for my dad. Where I grew up there was a Habitat design studios with a carpentry workshop where

> "HAVING A DECENT GLASS IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU PUT IN IT"

the prototypes were made. I used to go in there and see this man, who looked a bit like Dumbledore. He was a fantastic mad old chap. He'd always have things that he was carving with a chisel; the marks in the 'White Oak' porcelain are inspired by the marks of the chisel going through the wood. And all the little tops are the shape of an acorn cup. I used to play fairies with acorn cups when I was little. I've also got a box in my bedroom which is filled with seeds and pods that I've collected. I used to live in Australia and there are some really extraordinary ones there. They inspired the flowing organic shapes of the products.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR?

In terms of commercial success it would be the range with Portmeirion. It's very satisfying to do and we've really done it from the heart. It's something that we've done because we think it's beautiful, and other people enjoy it and want it in their homes.

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?

I grew up in London but we always had a place in the country and when I was about eight we moved to the country. We moved to a mad old school in Berkshire. It was a very pretty building but it was very odd when we moved in, it had things like rotting moose heads and animals. And there were rows and rows of little loos and pegs – it was very peculiar. »»

ABOVE LEFT Sophie's 'White Oak' range for Portmerion potteries.

“I'M HAPPIEST WHEN I'M MAKING BREAKFAST FOR MY KIDS. IT'S A TIME OF DAY WHEN I'M REALLY HAPPY”

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY?
My earliest memory is being in an asparagus patch. I must have been about two. We had a cottage in Suffolk where my parents grew vegetables, and they grew asparagus which they were very proud of. I remember standing in it and looking up and seeing the red berries and the blue sky beyond. I think my dad was in the background, he was digging potatoes or something.

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP?
I wanted to be a princess. The other thing I wanted to be was a headmistress – which I guess was the top job in the institution I was in at the time! I saw this position of power and I thought, 'I want to be there'. And I wanted to be a mum; that was my biggest ambition.

WHEN ARE YOU HAPPIEST?
I think I'm happiest when I'm making breakfast for my kids. It's a time of day when I'm really happy. I've just woken them up, they've come down for breakfast and it's all a little bit sleepy. I always cook them breakfast. I don't know why, but I like cooking in the morning. And I feel like the day has started well if I've made them a cooked breakfast.

For more information about Sophie Conran's range for Portmerion Potteries, visit: www.portmeirion.co.uk. To find out more about Sophie Conran visit: www.sophieconran.com.

BELOW The beautiful and simple 'White Oak' range.

FOUR REASONS
TO VISIT PORTMEIRION

Portmeirion, the Stoke-on-Trent-based ceramic table- and cookware company, was founded by Susan Williams-Ellis. Susan was the daughter of architect Sir Clough William-Ellis – the creator of Portmeirion Village in North Wales – and it turns out the Italianate-influenced village is just as inspiring as its namesake's pottery and well worth a visit for these four reasons among others...

1 **For colour inspiration.** The buildings that make up the village's shops and guest houses are a palette of bright shades: candy pink, teal, white, sky blue and egg-yolk yellow. 'Art deco' and 'postmodern' are both terms that have been used to describe the village and musician Jools Holland was so struck by the style of Portmeirion that he had aspects of his London home built to a Portmeirion-inspired design.

2 **To steal exotic garden ideas.** Surrounding the village is the Victorian Wood – home to a Japanese-inspired garden area, a large collection of rhododendrons and an extensive range of exotic plants. It's impossible to leave the place without a renewed sense of garden enthusiasm.

3 **You'll feel like you're in the Med.** In designing Portmeirion, Sir Clough William-Ellis said that his inspiration was to pay tribute to the atmosphere of the Mediterranean. This resonates throughout the village but nowhere more so than the central piazza with its pool, vibrant gardens and view of the coast.

4 **To buy Portmeirion from its spiritual home.** We can think of nowhere better to pick your 'White Oak by Sophie Conran' or 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' products, than in one of the village's seven kitsch shops. After wandering round the gardens, cure your retail therapy urges in The Golden Dragon, Pot Jam and The Ship Shop.

To find out visit: www.portmeirion-village.com or call 01766 770 000.

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PROPERTY **NEWS**

Every month we bring you the latest developments and innovations in the property industry. For July, we take a look at five prestigious homes in Lancashire, the latest new scheme to help first-time buyers get on the property ladder and a visionary new concept for eco-friendly homes.

A VISION OF THE **FUTURE?**

Affordable housing has been taken to a new level with the unveiling of a stylish housing model which requires no heating and comes complete with rooftop vegetable gardens.

UK-based international architects RMJM recently launched the 'MiLoft' design, with its rooftop 'aloftments', at the international property market MIPIM in Cannes, France. The concept is targeted at homeowners who wish to experience loft style living without buying a penthouse, and true affordability both in terms of purchase cost and energy usage. RMJM is experienced in the design of residential accommodation throughout the world. Its architects came up with the design in response to ambitious government targets for providing affordable new homes in cities where stock is in short supply and where falling property values are forcing developers to look at new ways of maximising the return on their development. In addition to protecting the environment by using zero carbon technology and sustainable materials, the MiLoft design will mean significant savings for homeowners and occupants with minimal energy usage and running costs.

By using 'Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery' (MVHR) technology designed by award-winning Max Fordham Consulting Engineers, combined with an exceptionally high level of air tightness, heat generated within the home is reused to maintain indoor air temperature at a constant level, negating the need for a traditional heating system.

In the summer, the dual aspect, double height loft style and open-plan living space will provide natural ventilation in high temperatures, reducing the requirement for air conditioning for hot climates. Rainwater is collected from the roof and redistributed for toilet flushing.

The low cost, low energy residential units will be available in a variety of layouts with one-, two-, three- or four-bedroom apartments and can be combined in a variety of configurations to create six-storey apartment blocks which will suit most urban locations. In addition to meeting government targets for sustainability, the new housing model has a low construction cost, starting at £55,000 per unit, and the modular design, with shallow foundations requiring little groundwork, means that the blocks can take only five months to build. Made from responsibly-sourced timber with steel stiffeners, the units are designed to fit on the back of a truck for easy transportation from the factory direct to the site.

The apartments encourage social interaction, with communal staircases which are more like garden terraces, featuring plants and trees, and rooftop gardens which give the opportunity for home-grown vegetables.

The MiLoft concept is already attracting interest from politicians and housing executives in the UK and RMJM is now preparing to make the model available in other urban centres which face affordable housing supply issues including Russia, India and the US.

"MiLoft is a new model for urban living providing a far better quality of life with the minimum impact on the environment," said RMJM's group design director Tony Kettle, who designed the concept. "In a world hit by recession caused by overconsumption and greed, it illustrates that good things need not cost the earth. We aim to revolutionise affordable housing supply across the world."

Visit: www.rmjm.com to find out more about RMJM.

EXCLUSIVE OPULENCE AT HERMITAGE

A grand 19th century estate in Lancashire has been restored into five exclusive residencies.

Hermitage Estate at Crook O'Lune, near Lancaster, was originally built for the Mayor of Lancaster in 1849. A recent renovation by homebuilder Beck Homes has seen the sympathetic conversion of the building into five properties, each fitted with bespoke interiors and high specifications. Surrounded on three sides by the River Lune, the Estate holds an elevated position providing unspoiled views in a secluded and tranquil setting, yet only four miles from the M6.

In keeping with their many unique attributes, the properties offer approximately 800 metres of private game fishing rights which are professionally managed.

Location and setting, however, are only part of the spectacular features that can be found at Hermitage Estate. "Our objective was to create superbly-appointed residences that will offer homebuyers the opportunity for seclusion and serenity in a private estate with the benefits of stunning countryside and game fishing literally at the bottom of their gardens," said Phil Pendlebury of Beck Homes. "There is no doubt that we have succeeded in that – Hermitage Estate really has to be visited to appraise the ambiance of this truly unique collection of homes."

The properties' specifications offer discerning homebuyers everything they could wish for. SieMatic kitchens are fitted with Villeroy & Boch products, and Lutron sound and lighting systems come as standard. Ranging in size from 1,033sq ft to 4,478sq ft the five properties, Hermitage Cottage, Thomas Gray House, Royal Gardens, Turner House and Lunedale range in price from £495,000 to £895,000.

For further information or to arrange a visit to the showhome contact selling agents Carter Jonas on 01539 722 592 or email: andrew.holmes@carterjonas.co.uk.

MANCHESTER MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS

A new mortgage scheme designed to remove consumer fears of house price deflation and negative equity is to be piloted across the UK.

ISIS Waterside Regeneration is one of five developers – the only in the North West – set to trial the New Build Mortgage scheme, making new housing more affordable and accessible for first-time buyers.

Mortgages for new homes have become virtually impossible to access for customers unable to raise more than a five per cent deposit. The New Build Mortgage will appeal to anyone keen to step onto the property ladder and seeking financial security against sliding property values. New Build Mortgage comes with a three year guarantee of up to 20 per cent of the original property value or purchase price, whichever is lower, to protect against falling house prices. Customers can borrow up to 95 per cent of the purchase price with the rate payable 6.59 per cent and an APR of 4.4 per cent fixed for three years for residential purchase mortgages.

ISIS is trialling the New Build Mortgage at its award-winning development Islington Wharf, located next to the Ashton Canal at Ancoats in East Manchester. Sales and marketing director at ISIS, David Caught, believes that the scheme has come at the right time. "Since January, we have seen a genuine increase in customers at Islington Wharf including, last month, the sale of our prime penthouse apartment as well as our largest three-bedroom duplex. The main concerns we hear from customers who are interested but nervous about buying a brand new home, are the difficulties they face in raising a large deposit and worries that their property might slip into negative equity. This new mortgage removes both of those concerns."

Islington Wharf was developed with an eye on long-term community living, rather than short-term financial gains; 'buy to live' rather than buy-to-let. What could have seemed to some like lofty ideals three years ago, now appears rooted in common sense and changing consumer values. Islington Wharf has more than 40 apartment variations. The nearby New Islington area has ambitious plans to support its growing community, including a new school, children's play area, crèche and shops. Already in place is a new health centre and work recently began on site for a new Metrolink connection at Islington Wharf, due to open in 2012.

To find out more about Islington Wharf visit: www.islingtonwharf.co.uk. New Build Mortgage is available exclusively from First Active through RBS Intermediary Partners.

PROPERTY FOCUS: **MERSEYSIDE**

From the Wirral Peninsula to the west to its eastern border with Greater Manchester, Merseyside is a county of changing landscapes. This month, we take a look at exclusive penthouses in Oxton, Redrow's latest house design and Liverpool's latest show apartments.

PENTHOUSE LUXURY

Penthouses at a development in Oxton offer more living space than an average detached house.

Trinity Gardens is a new development of one- and two-bedroom apartments and four luxury penthouses in Oxton, Wirral. Award-winning developer Rowland Homes has built the penthouses to an exclusive specification, with dimensions of up to 1,521sq ft.

Bathrooms and en-suites feature fittings from Duravit Stark and Hansgrohe taps. The fully-fitted kitchens include single oven, gas hob, chimney hood and stainless steel sink with chrome lever tap. The inclusion of an integrated fridge-freezer and washer dryer covers the modern essentials while a choice of units, worktops and ceramic wall tiles gives purchasers the opportunity to create an individual design.

"Naturally, there are great expectations with penthouses," said Gill Richardson, Rowland's sales manager. "They're the largest, most expensive properties at an apartment development and as such, need to be discernable by their sheer aspirational status. The open-plan internal layout is fantastically airy and designed to maximise natural light."

Each of the four penthouses features an open-plan kitchen, living and dining area, en-suites to master and second bedrooms plus dressing area to master bedroom. Two-bedroom designs offer a study room adjacent to the kitchen, living room and dining area. Three-bedroom penthouses feature an additional shower room to the master bedroom. Prices for penthouses start from £284,950. One- and two-bedroom apartments are also available, priced from £149,950 and £162,950 respectively.

Two show apartments at the development are available to view. For further information visit: www.rowland.co.uk.

FRESH DESIGNS

A collection of homes in Wirral is the first to feature Redrow's brand new designs and specifications.

Housebuilder Redrow has invested in a new specification for its homes at Woodlands Grange, Bromborough. The brand new designs include family-friendly layouts, fabulous contemporary kitchens and sleek bathroom suites.

"Meeting the needs of 21st century homebuyers is top of our agenda right now," said Christine Aitken, sales director for Redrow Homes (North). "In a challenging housing market we recognise the importance of putting ourselves ahead of the competition, and we believe our new specification homes at Woodlands Grange will do just that. Our new kitchens feature integrated appliances and modern floor-to-ceiling banks of units, which are inspired by the latest Italian designs."

Woodlands Grange, situated off New Chester Road in Bromborough, Wirral, will eventually comprise 192 properties in a mix of semi-detached, detached and mews houses, as well as a selection of apartments. The development is close to the 19th century garden village of Port Sunlight and the homes have been designed to complement the architecture of this historic village. It also offers easy access to the motorway network via the M53 and there are good rail links to Liverpool from the nearby Spital and Port Sunlight train stations.

To find out more about Woodlands Grange visit the sales office, open daily from 10am to 5.30pm, or call 0151 334 0716. Alternatively visit: www.redrow.co.uk.

360 DEGREE VIEWS

Five new show apartments have been unveiled at Liverpool's landmark development, One Park West.

One Park West is a 326-apartment, 17-storey building designed by world-renowned architect César Pelli, and its latest show apartments showcase the property's unrivalled views over Liverpool and the River Mersey. The five new show apartments include: two studios, one with an outside terrace, the other with tenth floor views of the Three Graces; two two-bedroom apartments, one with views across Liverpool, the other with views across the River Mersey and Albert Dock; a three-bedroom apartment with almost 360 degree views of Liverpool's famous skyline. Interior design companies Kingston Shaw and Furnish That Room won the opportunity to renovate the apartments after a four-way pitch. Kate Kingston, managing director of Kingston Shaw, explained how they pictured the sort of person who would live in a One Park West apartment and used it as a starting point. "Here at Kingston Shaw our intention is to design interiors that fit with a person's lifestyle," she said. "This is the second time we have designed show apartments for One Park West so our first step is to really get into the head of the person who'll be living in that room; where do they work, what do they want to use the apartment for, how old are they? When you are buying luxury, you want to think that these questions have been considered and answered. For example in the tenth floor studio apartment, we have commissioned a bespoke graffiti designed vinyl wall covering. It's a statement wall, it suits the kind of person who wants to live in the middle of a bustling city centre but also identifies with Liverpool's quirky, individual and independent brand. There really is nowhere else like One Park West to live in Liverpool and we are reflecting that with our interior design."

A launch weekend in June allowed visitors to explore the new show apartments and included demonstrations by chefs at YO! Sushi, a showcase on Sony home entertainment and Pimm's on One Park West's roof terrace. **Prices for apartments start at £99,000. Visit: www.oneparkwest.co.uk for further information.**

BELOW The neoclassical Royal Exchange Theatre, which started life in 1874 as the Cotton Exchange. **BELOW RIGHT** Inside, glazed domes light the impressive main room. **OPPOSITE MAIN** In the original hall 760 seats arranged in tiers encircle the performance area. **FAR RIGHT** The Royal Exchange Theatre sits in the urban setting of Manchester's St Ann's Square.

Photography Eleri Griffiths

AN ARCHITECT'S VIEW: A COUP DE THÉÂTRE

This month *Concept For Living*'s resident architect Kevin Drayton heads to the urban space of Manchester's St Ann's Square to introduce us to the delights of architectural design triumph the Royal Exchange Theatre.

From as young an age as I can remember, certain spaces within buildings have excited me. Possibly the single most amazing space I've ever been in is the Pantheon in Rome. If you've never been and you get the chance, I urge you to go and experience it. If it leaves you cold, you need never waste time visiting a celebrated building again. Or it could be one of your Desert Island moments.

When I was a schoolboy, and it became known that I wanted to be an architect (without having the slightest idea what that involved) a well-meaning art master arranged for me to go on a classical architecture study weekend. The key speaker was an eminent Cambridge professor and he was as mad as a teapot. For him, architecture meant the buildings of the Greeks and Romans and that was it.

He stood on one leg (as I said, he was mad) babbling wildly about triglyphs, metopes and caryatids and bored me witless. Fast-forward a few years: I've learned not to be afraid of architectural jargon, but now I'm caught between classicists and modernists. Which camp are you in? You can't support both. Rubbish! Exciting buildings can be found in all sorts of places in all kinds of styles. And in one particular building in Manchester we have a truly astonishing example of what can be achieved when we are prepared to set prejudices aside and let imagination cross the divides of time and ideology.

In 1874 the practice of Mills & Murgatroyd created a neoclassical blockbuster of a building in St Ann's Square, the Cotton Exchange. It was the centre of the city's economic activity and, for a while, "the biggest room in the world."

During the Second World War the building suffered bombing but survived, although changing times meant that its original use came to an end. Then in the 1970s the relatively young architectural practice of Levitt Bernstein came up with an idea that to this day I cannot think about without smiling. They created a theatre inside this magnificent space by suspending a futuristic space capsule within it, which hardly touched the original fabric. So you get two astonishing buildings for the price of one: a classical building and a supremely modern one. An architectural coup de théâtre to produce: a theatre.

And what a theatre it is. Walk in from the great urban space that is St Ann's Square and you will be in no doubt that you are somewhere very special indeed. The original hall still has the power to thrill. If you can tear your eyes away from the spaceship, lean your head back and gaze up at the glazed domes that light the vast room. I find it hard to resist the temptation to shout – the acoustics of the place almost dare you.

To experience a performance inside the Royal Exchange space capsule is to come as close to the essence of theatre as possible. The 760 seats, arranged in tiers, encircle the performance area, with no one ever more than 9m from the action. This is a collective experience for everyone, audience, cast and crew alike. There is no 'them and us', no front and rear, just full 360 degree theatre, so close you can smell it. Off-stage action can be heard all around you as the staging opportunities of the 'building within a building' arrangement are exploited.

"It's a truly astonishing example of what can be achieved when we are prepared to set prejudices aside and let imagination cross the divides of time and ideology"

You may have guessed that I have a great love of theatre. Once upon a time in a land faraway – the Edinburgh Fringe actually – I was part of a production of the play *Tiny Alice* by the American playwright Edward Albee, best known for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. The play features a model of the building in which the action takes places. At the climax of the play, flames begin to appear inside the model and we slowly understand that the real building itself is being consumed by fire. I'm not aware that the Royal Exchange has ever staged *Tiny Alice* but what a setting it would be – a model inside a play inside an auditorium inside a great hall.

Even if you think theatre is not for you, I urge you to go and visit the Royal Exchange. Theatre at the very heart of the city. *Doctor Who* meets Charles Dickens. *Star Wars* in a classical temple. Beats a DVD and a takeout any day.

Kevin Drayton is a partner at One17 Design. Visit: www.one17design.com to find out more about his work.

If you would like to visit Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre and admire this architectural inspiration for yourself, you can find further details at: www.royalexchange.co.uk or if you would like to book to see a play there call the box office on 0161 833 9833.

"If you can tear your eyes away from the spaceship, lean your head back and gaze up at the glazed domes that light the vast room"

DAVID MELLOR **1930-2009**

Shortly after last month's piece on the Round Building at Hathersage went to print, we learned of the sad death of David Mellor.

His enormous contribution to British design and manufacturing was largely unknown outside the design industry because of his natural reticence. Rather than talking about design, for him design meant being "concerned not just with making objects... but just as importantly with making choices, with choosing what we use, choosing how to live."

He is survived by his wife, the writer Fiona MacCarthy and his children Corin and Clare, both of whom are involved in carrying on the family business.

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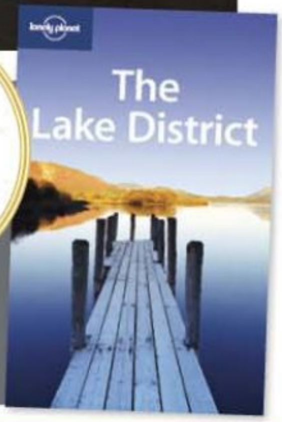

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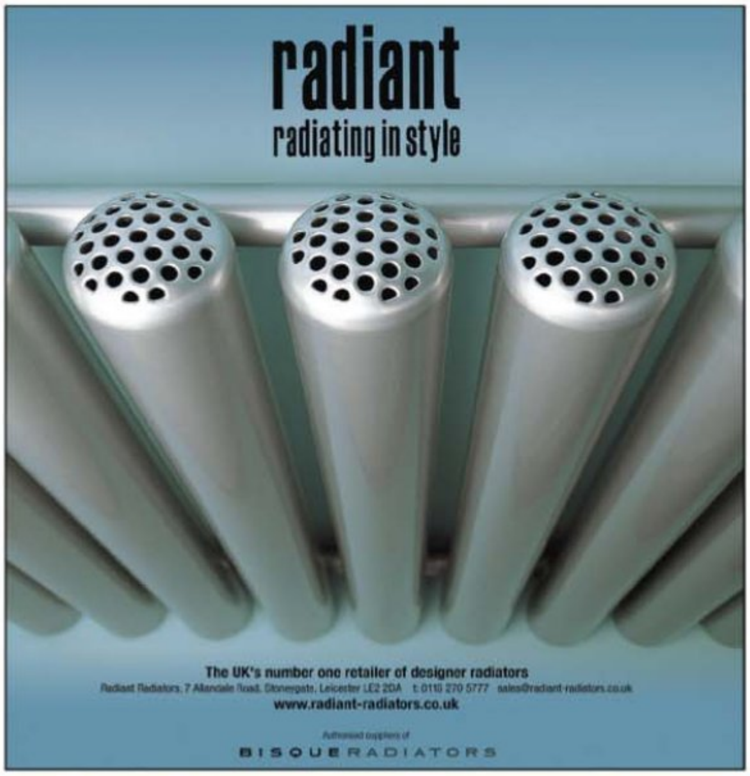
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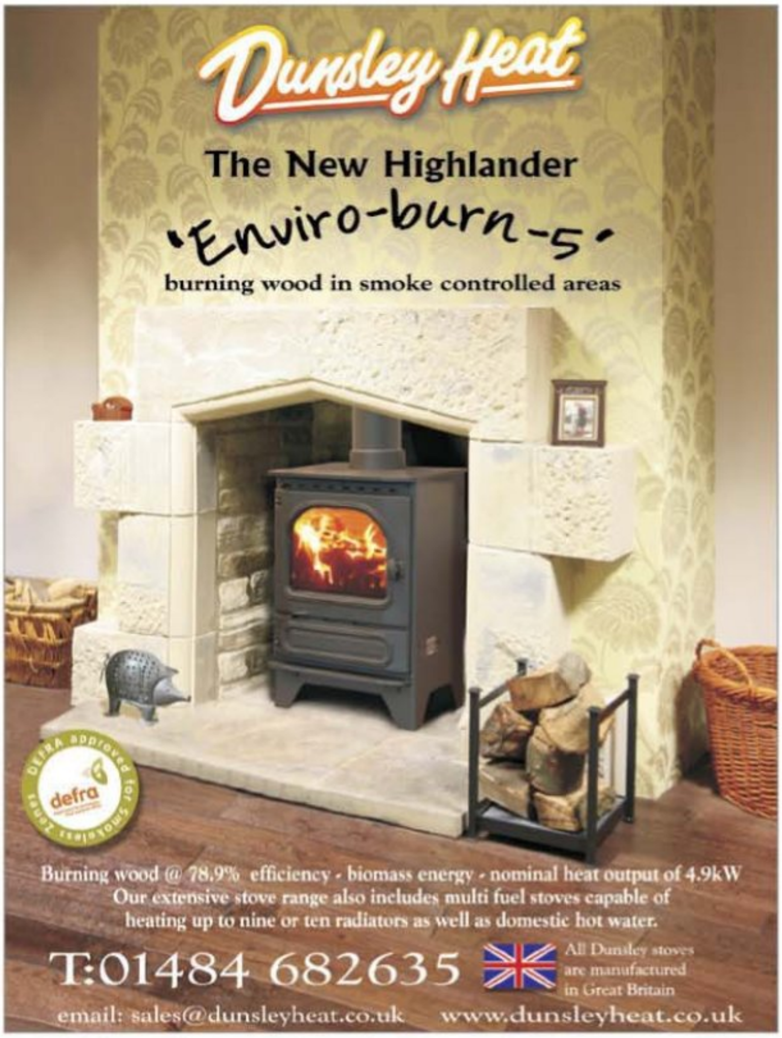
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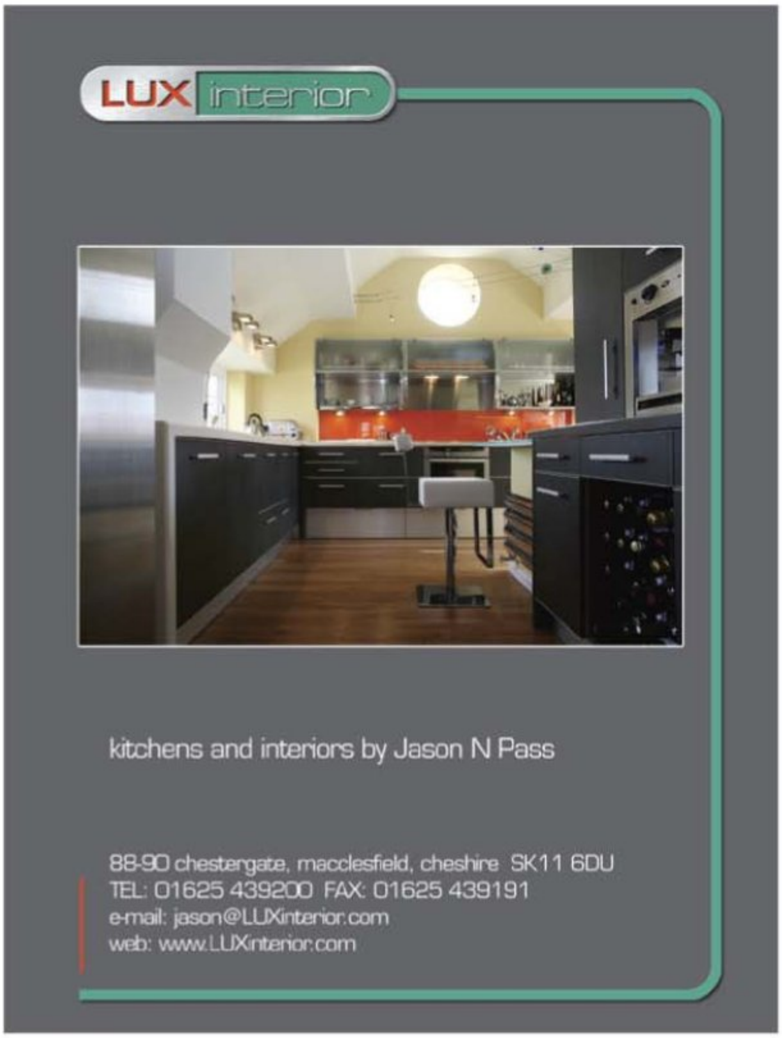
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